

OVERVIEW

SNAPPER GROUPEL ADVISORY PANEL

Charleston Marriott
Charleston, SC
October 5 & 6, 2011

1. Update on the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Amendment (Attachment 1) and Regulatory Amendment 11

The Comprehensive ACL Amendment contains actions to establish an Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) for snapper grouper species that are not overfished or undergoing overfishing, dolphin, wahoo and golden crab. In addition, the amendment contains actions to remove species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU), designate Ecosystem Component species, and establish species groupings for snapper grouper species. Council Staff will provide an update on the status of the amendment.

Regulatory Amendment 11 would take away the 240-foot (40 fathom) deep-water closure that was implemented in Amendment 17B. Council staff will provide an update on the status of the amendment.

2. Update on Black Sea Bass and Golden Tilefish Assessments

Council staff will update the AP on the status of the assessments. Black sea bass and golden tilefish are being assessed under SEDAR 25. The Data and Assessment workshops of the SEDAR process took place earlier this year. The Review workshop is scheduled to take place in mid-October. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the assessments at their meeting in November and the Council will do so at their December meeting in Raleigh, NC.

3. Amendments 18A (Attachment 3) and 18B (Attachment 4)

Amendment 18A proposed changes to the management of the black sea bass fishery. Proposed measures aim to reduce overcapacity and reduce the rate of harvest in the black sea bass pot fishery. In addition, the amendment would include any changes to management measures that are needed as a result of the ongoing stock assessment. Council staff will provide an update on actions and alternatives and timing for the amendment. The AP should provide recommendations on each of the actions in this amendment.

Amendment 18B addresses management of golden tilefish. Actions in the amendment currently include: limit participation in the golden tilefish fishery through an

endorsement program, modify the golden tilefish fishing year, change the golden tilefish commercial trip limits, and update MSA parameters based on the results of the ongoing assessment as necessary. Council staff will provide an update on actions and alternatives and timing for the amendment. The AP should provide recommendations on each of the actions in this amendment.

4. Amendment 20A – Wreckfish (Attachment 5)

The overall purpose of this amendment is to adjust the distribution of wreckfish shares in order to remove inactive effort from the commercial sector and allow the commercial sector's ACL to be harvested and thereby achieve Optimum Yield (OY) in the fishery. To achieve this, the proposed actions will 1) define and revert inactive wreckfish shares; 2) redistribute reverted shares among remaining shareholders; 3) define a cap on the number of shares one entity may own; and 4) establish an appeals process. Council staff will provide an update on actions and alternatives and timing for the amendment. The AP should provide recommendations on each of the actions in this amendment.

5. Amendment 24 - Red Grouper Rebuilding (Attachment 5)

Amendment 24 is being developed to put a rebuilding plan in place for red grouper. The red grouper stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing. When it is determined that a stock is undergoing overfishing, measures must be implemented to end overfishing. In cases where stocks are overfished the Council must implement a rebuilding plan. Council staff will provide an overview of actions and alternatives and timing for the amendment. The AP should provide recommendations on each of the actions in this amendment.

6. Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3

The AP will receive a presentation from Council staff including a review of items for consideration in CE-BA 3. Currently, the Council is considering addressing the following items:

- Protective measures for speckled hind and warsaw grouper in the mid-shelf fishery
- Powerhead prohibition in EEZ off NC
- Potential expansion of HAPC areas
- Consideration of expansion of Snowy Wreck MPA
- Wreckfish fishery impacts to deepwater coral habitat
- Impacts associated with deep dropping for other SG species

The Council is looking to develop a comprehensive list of measures and approve for scoping at the December 2011 meeting. Scoping meetings will be held during the last week in January and first week in February 2012. The AP should provide recommendations on proposed items.

7. Update on the Marine Recreational Information Program (Attachment 6)

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is modifying the catch estimation method for recreational harvest from 2004-2010 to address improvements identified for the estimation of recreational catch. Revised estimation procedures have been developed and are undergoing review, and will be applied to existing data going back to 2004. Correction of estimates prior to 2004 will also be considered in the future.

Due to planned changes in the estimation procedure, MRIP estimates of recreational catch for 2004-2010 are likely to change. Estimates for 2011 and beyond will be based on the new method. Changes in recreational catch estimates for 2004-2010 raise several concerns for developing South Atlantic Council amendments since the new MRIP values could result in changes to the values of ABC, OFL, and sector-based allocations and ACLs. If proposed ACL, ABC, OFL values are not updated with the new MRIP estimates, there could be a disjunction between the information used to set targets and limits and the information used to evaluate current conditions to determine if ACLs are met and AMs are triggered. As of September 2011, the new MRIP estimates had not yet been released.

Council staff will provide an overview of the proposed changes and implementation schedule.

8. Other Business

As time allows, the AP will address the following:

- a. Status of red porgy and vermilion snapper stocks – The Council requests that the AP provide general information on the status of these two stocks to assist in data collections for upcoming stock assessments. In particular, information on fishermen’s perception of abundance, size composition (range of sizes that fishermen are encountering), discards (estimates of discards and due to size limit or bag limit or both, etc), any problems fishermen foresee or have encountered in these fisheries. See attached for a generic list of items that would inform the discussion.
- b. Update on new South Atlantic fishery-independent monitoring program – if possible, personnel from the SEFSC or SCDNR will present an overview of the program and address questions from the AP
- c. Council/public communication – the AP indicated intend to discuss ways to improve the current system.

Fishery Performance and History – Species X

Where do you fish for Species X? What seasons and depths do you fish for Species X?

How does the size and number of Species X that you catch now compare to catches from the past 5 years, 10 years, or longer, considering use of the same gear and in the same areas?

Describe any factors that you think affect your ability to catch Species X and when these things occurred.

For example:

1. environmental factors such as extreme temperatures, hurricanes, Gulf Stream location, algae blooms, etc
2. economic factors such as price of gas, customer availability, US economy
3. technological factors such as a new GPS unit, receipt of new fishing location information, new gear design, improvements to your vessel or vessels in general, etc
4. management factors such as new regulations or regulations on other species that have an effect on Species X

What trends do you see in the discarding of fish? Are you discarding more or less fish now? Are discards due to size or catch limits?

What issues do you feel are important for this assessment of Species X to consider?

What concerns do you have about the species?

How do you think the abundance of Species X today compares to the past (give years for the comparisons)?