



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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JUNE 10-14, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

REVISION #2 6/26/19

STUART, FLORIDA

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's June 2019 meeting in Stuart, Florida. Briefing materials, presentations, and public comments are available on the Council's website at:

<http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/>

Final Committee Reports contain more details of what was accomplished for each committee and are located on the June 2019 briefing book page. In addition, the Summary of Motions on the Council's website includes all motions from the meeting. Read further details and see images and other links at the June 2019 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=f1f50b22ef0e4130b1fadf1c3c852be8>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Mackerel Emergency Action	The Council approved requesting NMFS raise the commercial king mackerel trip limit south of the Flagler/Volusia County line, Florida from 50-fish to 75-fish for the 2019-2020 season via emergency rule. The value of unharvested quota over the last four fishing seasons averaged \$3,885,647 per season.	The Council's letter requesting emergency action will be sent to NMFS during the week of June 17 th with a request to implement this prior to Season 2 of the 2019-2020 season.
CMP Framework Amendment 8 – the Council approved various alternatives to permanently increase the trip limit in the southern zone.	Alternative trip limits for Season 2 include: 1. 75 fish 10/1-1/31 with increase to 100 fish in Feb if less than 70% of quota landed 2. 100 fish 10/1-1/31 with increase to 150 fish in Feb if less than 70% of quota landed 3. 150 fish 10/1-1/31 with increase to 175 fish in Feb if less than 70% of quota landed	Staff and the IPT will work on CMP Framework Amendment 8 and bring analyses back to the Council at the September Council meeting. The Council's intent is to have these permanent regulations in place prior to the start of the 2020/21 fishing year.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
<p>Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Commercial effort</p>	<p>The Council directed staff to prepare a white paper with a thorough analysis of effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and a discussion of possible avenues to control effort, including: a limited access commercial permit, a limited access gillnet endorsement in the southern zone, and collaboration with state agencies.</p> <p>The Council approved a control date of March 7, 2019 when they began considering effort controls for Atlantic Spanish mackerel.</p>	<p>The Committee & Council will review the white paper in September and determine how to move forward.</p> <p>Once published in the Federal Register, this control date will put everyone on notice that should the Council decide to move forward with an effort limitation program, anyone entering the fishery after this date would not be guaranteed participation in the program.</p>
<p>Visioning Process in the Mackerel Cobia fishery</p>	<p>Prepare for port meetings to get a complete picture of the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.</p>	<p>The Council will determine the timing of port meetings at the September meeting.</p>
Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
<p>Snapper Grouper Abbreviated Framework Amendment 3 (South Atlantic Blueline Tilefish ACL)</p>	<p>The Council directed staff to begin development of framework Amendment 3 to establish a new South Atlantic blueline tilefish Annual Catch Limit (ACL).</p>	<p>The Council will review the document in September and provide guidance. Public comments will be taken at the December 2-6, 2019 meeting in Wilmington, NC. The Council will make any necessary revisions and consider approving for formal review at the December meeting.</p>
<p>Spawning Special Management Zone Story Map</p>	<p>The Council approved the story map for review and comment by the Information & Education, Law Enforcement, and Snapper Grouper Advisory Panels. This is intended as an outreach tool for the public to learn about the areas protected and the target species, the process to create and review the managed areas, the goals and objectives for the areas, and regulations in the areas.</p>	<p>The Advisory Panels will review at their next meetings. The Council will consider any revisions suggested by the advisory panels and will publicize this information.</p>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Season Modifications)	Options being considered: 1.Remove minimum #days (3) for a season – keep or remove. 2.Modify recreational season start date: a. No Action – weekends only (Fri, Sat, Sun) begins on 2 nd Friday in July unless otherwise specified. b. May 1 st , June 1 st or September 1 st . 3.Revise days of the week harvest allowed during recreational season a. No Action – Fri, Sat, Sun. b. On consecutive Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays. c. Every other weekend – specify days. d. Last weekend of month – specify days. e. Council specifies at March meeting. f. Allow harvest in May for a portion of the days and resume harvest in the fall is enough ACL remains. 4.Modify commercial season start date: a. No Action – 2 nd Monday in July, unless otherwise specified. b. 2 nd Monday in May, unless otherwise specified. c. 2 nd Monday in June, unless otherwise specified. d. May 1 st but no commercial harvest allowed during July and August.	The Council approved Regulatory Amendment 33 for public hearings to be conducted via webinars and listening stations during August. The Council will review public input, make any needed changes, and provide guidance to staff at the September 16-20, 2019 Council meeting in Charleston, SC. The Council's intent is to approve for formal review at the December 2-6, 2019 Council meeting in Wilmington, NC.
Red Grouper Regulatory Amendment 30	The Council reviewed the amendment & regulations, and approved them for formal review. Actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the rebuilding schedule to equal the maximum time allowed to rebuild (Tmax) which is 10 years ending in 2028 with 2019 = Year 1. • Jan thru April no recreational or commercial harvest/possession/sale/purchase of any shallow-water grouper (gag, black grouper, scamp, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, grasby, or coney) and extend the closure off NC & SC for red grouper in May. • Establish a commercial red grouper trip limit = 200 pounds gutted weight. 	The Council will send Regulatory Amendment 30 and regulations to NMFS for formal review and implementations by the end of June 2019.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Snapper Grouper Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices & Powerheads)	<p>The Council reviewed public comments, document and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removed the 6 month delay in effectiveness from the preferred alternative that would require that a descending device be on board all vessels (commercial, for-hire, & private) fishing for or possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit. 2. Modified the definition of descending device: “ For the purpose of this requirement, “descending device” means an instrument, SUFFICIENTLY WEIGHTED, that will release fish at a depth sufficient for the fish to be able to recover from the effects of barotrauma, A MINIMUM OF 33 feet (twice the atmospheric pressure at the surface) or greater AND ideally released at the same depth that it was caught. The device can be, but is not limited to, a weighted hook, lip clamp, or box that will hold the fish while it is lowered to depth. The device should be capable of releasing the fish automatically, releasing the fish by actions of the operator of the device, or by allowing the fish to escape on its own. Since minimizing surface time is critical to increasing survival, descending devices shall be rigged and ready for use while fishing is occurring. 3. Require the use of non-offset, non-stainless-steel circle hooks when using hook-and-line gear and natural baits in the EEZ north of 28 degrees north latitude (about 25 miles south of Cape Canaveral, FL). 4. Require use of non-stainless-steel hooks when fishing with hook-and-line gear and natural baits in the EEZ. 5. Allow powerheads in the EEZ off SC. 	<p>The Council will review the draft regulations and document at the September 16-20, 2019 meeting in Charleston, SC and consider approval for formal review.</p>
Wreckfish ITQ Review	<p>The Council received an update and will see a final document in September.</p>	<p>The Council will consider approving the final document at the September 16-20, 2019 meeting in Charleston, SC.</p>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Snapper Grouper Options Paper for removing Almaco Jack from the Jacks Complex	The Council directed staff to begin work on a white paper to consider removing Almaco jacks from the Jacks Complex.	The Council will review the white paper at the December 2-6, 2019 meeting in Wilmington, NC.
Lionfish and traps	SERO notified the committee that the General Prohibitions in the Code of Federal Regulations that specify the authorized gear types by fishery need minor corrections for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council section. In addition, SERO suggested that Council and SERO staff jointly develop an informational paper for the Council's review in September 2019 that considers the addition of authorized gear types for lionfish (non-FMP) to the regulations to authorize the retention of lionfish taken while legally fishing additional gear types. In addition, the informational paper would consider refining the fish trap definition to authorize the retention of lionfish incidentally taken in legally fished traps when that bycatch exceeds 25% of the trap's catch. The informational paper would outline any unintended consequences of taking these two actions.	The Council will review the white paper at the September 2019 meeting and provide guidance.
Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Spiny Lobster Spiny lobster commercial trip limit for vessels with snapper grouper unlimited permit (SG1) and a spiny lobster tailing permit.	The Council directed staff to work on a Regulatory Amendment to create a commercial trip limit for such vessels off NC, SC, and GA: 1.No Action. Commercial possession limit = 2/person. 2.Commercial possession limit of 20, 30 or 40 lobsters/vessel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Scoping if necessary in Summer 2019 •Select actions/alternatives to include in the amendment – December 2019

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Allocation Trigger Policy	<p>The Council reiterated its desire to apply both indicator-based and time-based criteria as triggers for re-examining allocations and modified them. The Council reviewed a spreadsheet with information regarding the first year a time-based allocation trigger would be reviewed. They reiterated their desire to have time-based criteria triggered every seven years should no other indicator-based criterion trigger a review. When a review is triggered, for any reason, the year of the next review will be set 7 years after the most recent review.</p> <p>For indicator based triggers the Council updated the wording of the triggers:</p> <p>INDICATOR BASED TRIGGERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either sector exceeds its ACL or closes prior to the end of its fishing year 3 out of 5 consecutive years. • Either sector under-harvests its ACL or OY by at least 50% 3 out of 5 consecutive years. • After a stock assessment is approved by the SSC and presented to the Council. • After the Council reviews a species Fishery Performance Report. 	<p>The Council will send the final allocation trigger policy to NMFS by the end of June 2019.</p> <p>The Council directed staff to prepare an allocation trigger status report to be presented during the Executive Finance Committee for the December Council meeting each year beginning in 2020.</p>
Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
SSC Selection	<p>The Council reappointed the 6 members who reapplied (Robert Ahrens, Luiz Barbieri, Jeff Buckel, Churchill Grimes, Genevieve Nesslage, and George Sedberry). There is one open seat and the expertise most needed at this time is general ecology, ecosystems, and habitat. The Council appointed Dr. Wilson Laney.</p>	<p>Letters will be sent out by the end of June.</p>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
SEDAR	The Council made appointments to the SEDAR assessment of scamp and received an update of ongoing assessment projects. Results of the red snapper stock assessment should be available for Council consideration in 2022. The Council concurred that the terms of reference for the MRIP review prepared by the SSC address Council concerns and direction. The Council reviewed the research plan, suggested highlighting the need for acoustic tagging projects in closed areas, and approved the research plan.	Scamp appointments will be notified. The SEDAR Committee will review the black sea bass and red grouper assessment's scopes of work prior to sending to the SEFSC. The research plan will be sent to the SERO and SEFSC, and distributed. The final SSC MRIP workshop terms of reference will be distributed to the Council.
AP Selection	<p>The Council removed the sector-specific seat designation on the Habitat and Ecosystem-Based Management AP and modified the structure of the AP to create an agency seat for the current at-large geologist/research seat.</p> <p>Given that management of Atlantic cobia was transferred to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Council dissolved the Cobia Sub-Panel on the Mackerel Cobia AP.</p>	<p>These changes will be implemented immediately.</p> <p>The Council acknowledged the valuable contributions of the members of the Cobia Sub-Panel and directed staff to ensure their appreciation is reflected in follow-up communications. The Council will discuss forming a new AP to address species moving northwards at the next meeting.</p>
MyFishCount	<p>Chip Collier, Council staff, gave an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 977 users/member profiles (115 increase since last Council meeting). • 817 vessels (increase of 78) logged trips. • 2,709 fish reported. • App & web portal continue to be promoted; Spring 2019 webinar trainings were conducted around grouper opening/webinar training will continue. • Cooperation with SC Wildlife Federation on a Best Fishing Practices tutorial. • Shiny app (data.safmc.net/MyFishCount) that allows anglers to access information collected through MyFishCount. • Survey to understand angler perceptions & opinions. • Data are being edited and uploaded to ACCSP; the API is now complete. 	Bebe Harrison was hired and will work with private recreational fishermen to have them report, especially during the red snapper season openings. This experience will be used by the Council as they continue to work on the permitting and reporting amendment at the December 2-6, 2019 meeting in Wilmington, NC.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Citizen Science Program	<p>John Carmichael, Council staff, gave an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia Byrd, Program Manager – transition going well. • SAFMC Team led a symposium at the Citizen Science 2019 Conference. • Scamp app to collect discard data for the next assessment – launching soon. • FISHstory, a pilot project to document the historical catch and length distribution for early headboat catches is ongoing. • Collaborator on TNC project in Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary. • Continuing Partnership Development. 	<p>Work will continue on the program and these two projects. The Scamp app is being rolled-out in June and the photo project is progressing; the first batch of scanned pictures have been received.</p> <p>Scamp results will be available for 2020 scamp assessment. The length data will be available for future assessments once the project is completed.</p>
For-Hire Recreational Reporting	In March, the Council received an update on the amendment: The Amendment was approved on June 12, 2018 and the Final Rule was expected to publish in mid-April 2019 with a 60-day cooling off period.	At the June meeting, the Council was told the final rule is still being reviewed. No specific timing was available. The Council cancelled training workshops previously scheduled for June since the final rule was not available.
Full Council Actions: 1. NC Aquarium EFP request 2. Highly Migratory Species (HMS) 3. Council Letter on Bigeye & Yellowfin Tuna Management 4. Biscayne National Park 5. Blackfin Tuna in FL 6. China Tariffs on Seafood	<p>The Council recommended approval of the request with a recommendation that they purchase, rather than harvest, live rock. In reference to Amendment 13 (Bluefin Tuna), the Council approved sending a comment letter to HMS that supports immediate discontinuation of the purse seine fishery with redistribution of that quota as appropriate. Also express continued support to extend the January sub-quota to the end of April.</p> <p>The Council approved supporting the bigeye and yellowfin tuna management letter drafted on behalf of the 5 East Coast Councils.</p> <p>The Council directed staff to send a letter to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission indicating that the Council does not want a role in directly managing the portion of the EEZ in the Park and requesting the Council be kept advised of ongoing activities.</p> <p>The Council approved sending a letter to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission indicating the Council does not intend to regulate blackfin tuna.</p> <p>The Council directed staff to send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce about the impacts of tariffs on seafood (e.g., spiny lobster).</p>	The Council will send letters related to each of these items before the end of June.