

Summary of Public Comment
August 6, 2019

Reef Fish Amendment 51: Establish Gray Snapper Status Determination Criteria and Modify Annual Catch Limits

Webinar Public Hearing
July 17, 2019

Council/Staff

John Sanchez
Susan Boggs
John Froeschke
Emily Muehlstein

11 members of the public attended.

Dylan Hubbard – Charter and Headboat Operator; Madeira Beach, Florida

Supports the current preferred alternatives because they're the most lenient and will allow us to avoid management changes in the gray snapper fishery. The new stock assessment caused some huge uncertainty and he is happy that the stock status criteria was changed to avoid ACL closures in this healthy fishery. He would like to have the Council reach out to the states and ask them to make gray snapper minimum size limits consistent with the federal minimum size limit, especially because this species relies on the state water habitats. He would like to ensure that they have an opportunity to grow large enough to spawn before they're harvested so that the fishery could grow to be even healthier and more robust.

Steven Atran – Former Council Staff Member; Tampa, Florida

He suggests that the MSY proxy be set at $F_{30\%SPR}$ (Action 1, Alternative 3). Most of the literature on MSY proxies suggest that it be set between 20% and 40%. The Council typically sets it at the mid-point, 30%, in the absence of any reason to make it different. Red snapper, which is managed at 26%, is the exception because there is some scientific evidence supporting a lower SPR. That evidence does not exist for mangrove snapper, in fact the mangrove snapper stock may be less resilient than red snapper because the difference in their geographic distribution. For this reason, they're more susceptible to overfishing and should be managed more conservatively.

Summary of Written Public Comment

7 comments were received.

- Adopt criteria that avoids a rebuilding plan. This is a healthy fishery.

- Support for all current preferred alternatives. The mangrove (gray) snapper population is not overfished. The huge uncertainty in the assessment should not led to changes in our ability to prosecute the fishery.
- Support for Action 1, Preferred Alternative 2. Set the maximum sustainable yield proxy at $F_{26\%SPR}$
- Support for Action 3, Preferred Alternative 4. Set the minimum stock size threshold at 50%*BMSY
- The Gulf States should consider raising their minimum size limit.