



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405
 Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: www.safmc.net

Charlie Phillips, Chair | Captain Mark Brown, Vice Chair
 Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

REVISED* **MARCH 5-9, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT** **JEKYLL ISLAND, GEORGIA**

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s March 2018 meeting in Jekyll Island, Georgia.

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 March 2018 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 March 2018 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map:

<https://arcg.is/0H55O1>. The Meeting News Release is available at: <http://safmc.net/news-releases/03-09-18-safmc-news-release-council-delays-changes-to-atlantic-cobia-management-at-march-council-meeting/>

***Revised to correct timing on visioning amendments to show final approval in September not December.**

| Issue: | Action Taken: | Schedule: |
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| Red Snapper | <p>Amendment 43 is currently under review by NMFS. The amendment was sent to NMFS on November 20, 2017.</p> <p>The Council provided guidance on actions to include in Amendment 46:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Recreational Permit • Private Recreational Electronic Reporting <p>The following items were split into a framework amendment to move faster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require use of Best Fishing Practices (e.g., descending devices, venting, hook type) • Adjust Powerhead Prohibitions in the South Atlantic (allow in the EEZ off SC or prohibit use of powerheads in entire EEZ) | <p>If approved, the recreational season would begin on July 13, 2018 (2nd Friday) and the commercial season on July 9, 2018. Recreational bag = 1 with no size limit. Commercial trip limit = 75 pounds gutted weight with no size limit.</p> <p>Review actions in Amendment 46 at the June 2018 meeting.</p> <p>Review actions at the June 2018 meeting. The Framework Amendment would move faster than Amendment 46 during 2018.</p> |

| Issue: | Action Taken: | Schedule: |
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| Recreational Visioning Amendment | Regulatory Amendment 26: Provided guidance and revised Actions & Alternatives. Alternatives include options for modifications to bag limits, seasons for deep-water species and shallow-water groupers, and size limits for deep-water species and triggerfish that would help streamline the regulations for anglers, law enforcement, and managers. Approved for public hearings. | Public hearings in Spring. Review public comments, modify document, and approve all actions in June 2018. Review and approve for formal review in September 2018. |
| Commercial Visioning Amendment | Regulatory Amendment 27: Provided guidance and revised Actions & Alternatives for trip limits, size limits, split seasons, seasons, and other measures. Approved for public hearings. | Public hearings in Spring. Review public comments, modify document, and approve all actions in June 2018. Review and approve for formal review in September 2018. |
| For-Hire Moratorium Amendment | The Council provided guidance on what to include in the scoping document. | Review draft scoping document and consider approving for scoping at the June 2018 meeting. |
| Golden Tilefish | The Council provided guidance on alternatives to include in the amendment. The Council requested the SSC to revisit the ABC recommendation indicating the Council is willing to accept the risk of overfishing associated with an ABC of 362,000 pounds whole weight for 2019 and 2020. The Council's rationale is included in the Snapper Grouper Committee Report. | Conduct a public hearing at the June 2018 meeting. The Council will then review and approve the amendment for formal review with the intent to have regulations in place prior to January 1, 2019 when the season opens. |
| Red Grouper | The Council directed staff to begin an amendment to revise the rebuilding plan for red grouper. | Review the draft amendment in June 2018. |
| Yellowtail Snapper | The Council directed staff to work on an amendment to revise the accountability measures to remove in-season closures for either sector until the total ACL is met. | Review the draft amendment and provide guidance to staff in June 2018. The intent is to have changes in place for the 2019 season. |
| Modifications to Sea Turtle Release Gear | The Council directed staff to continue working on the framework amendment and conduct scoping. | Review scoping comments, provide guidance, and approve actions/alternatives in June 2018. |

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| Mackerel Cobia | <p>State implementation plans, under the approved ASMFC Cobia Plan, are scheduled to become effective April 1, 2018.</p> <p>The Council revised the Actions and Alternatives in CMP Amendment 31 (Atlantic Cobia) and retained Alternative 2 as preferred: Remove Atlantic cobia from the CMP Fishery Management Plan. The Council directed staff to make the requested revisions, address the NOAA GC concerns, and bring the document back to the Council in June 2018 for final action.</p> <p>The Council selected Preferred Alternative 3 in the framework amendment to change the Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limit.</p> | <p>State regulations effective April 1, 2018. The Council will help get the word out to the public.</p> <p>The Council will review the revised amendment and take final action at the June 2018 meeting.</p> <p>Council staff will work on this framework and bring it back at a future meeting.</p> |
| Spiny Lobster | The Council reviewed scoping comments and provided guidance on Actions & Alternatives to be analyzed in Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 (Modifications to Gear Requirements & Cooperative Management Procedure). | This is a joint Amendment with the Gulf Council. Review the amendment and approve for public hearings at the June 2018 meeting. Public hearings are expected in July with final approval by the Gulf in August and the South Atlantic in September. |
| Habitat and Ecosystem Based Management | The Council approved the Fishery Ecosystem Plan II, the FEP II Dashboard, the Implementation Plan, and the 2-Year Roadmap. | Prepare materials for posting to the Council's website and begin work on the items identified. |
| Citizen Science Program | The Council received recommendations from the five Action Teams busy developing the program. | The Council agreed that the recommendations were on track and that they would now be put into motion by the Action Teams for the scamp pilot project during 2018. |
| For-Hire Recreational Reporting | <p>The Council received an update on the amendment: the Notice of Availability of the Amendment and the Proposed Rule are under review in headquarters and are expected to publish soon.</p> <p>Council staff briefed the Council on the For-Hire Outreach efforts.</p> | <p>The proposed rule and notice of availability of the amendment are expected to publish in the federal register soon. The goal is to have regulations effective this summer.</p> <p>For-Hire reporting training and outreach will continue in 2018.</p> |

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| SEDAR | <p>Dr. Cisco Werner, acting SEFSC Director, outlined approaches to get more assessments sooner. This includes a Research/Operational Assessment framework and providing interim analyses of assessed stocks.</p> <p>The Council provided the following guidance for the SEDAR Steering Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requested red grouper as the first MRIP revision assessment. 2. Recommend the next king mackerel assessment be a standard assessment. 3. Requested the SEFSC provide guidance on stocks to consider for a 1st benchmark assessment in 2023 and 2024, considering the prioritization tool and the need for a wreckfish assessment. | <p>The Council supported the efforts to get more stock assessments.</p> <p>The South Atlantic Council representatives will raise these issues at the next SEDAR Steering Committee meeting.</p> |
| ABC Control Rule | <p>Directed staff to work on an amendment to the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, Sargassum, and Coral FMPs to make changes to the ABC control rule.</p> <p>Directed staff to work on an amendment to change the in-season closure for the recreational sector.</p> | <p>Review a revised options paper at the June 2018 meeting.</p> <p>Review an options paper at the June 2018 meeting.</p> |