

Reef Fish Advisory Panel
Scope of Work
October 2, 2023
Tampa, Florida

Agenda Item IV: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Action: Discussion

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will accept nominations and facilitate the Advisory Panel's (AP) voting for a Chair and Vice Chair. Nominees must accept at the time of their nomination to be considered. Those elected will assume their positions immediately.

Agenda Item VI: Review of Reef Fish and IFQ Program Landings

Action: Presentation and discussion

Committee input and next steps: Staff from the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) will review the recent reef fish and individual fishing quota (IFQ) program landings. This presentation is informational only. The AP should review the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Update: MRIP-FES Pilot Study and Proposed Next Steps

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Ms. Sarah Lazo from the NOAA Office of Science and Technology (OST) will present the recent findings of the pilot study on the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES). The pilot study discovered the presence of telescoping bias in FES, whereby the order of questions regarding the frequency with which a respondent went fishing within prescribed time periods resulted in an overestimation of overall fishing effort, and thus landings. This overestimation, generalized across regions and species, was estimated to be approximately 39% for the private vessel mode and 32% for the shore mode. Ms. Lazo will briefly summarize the follow-up pilot study to be conducted in 2024, and the next steps planned by NOAA OST. The AP should review the information presented and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item VIII: Summary: Gag Research Review from September 2023 Gulf SSC Meeting

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will review presentations given to the SSC in September from several researchers on Gulf gag grouper. These presentations were intended to inform the SSC and assist it in providing recommendations to the Council in keeping with the Council’s goals for the Gulf gag stock: to reduce fishing mortality on male gag; to constrain future harvests to the ACL; to increase the probability of rebuilding the stock; to avoid increasing discards; and, to reduce vulnerability of gag during spawning to increase spawning success. The AP should evaluate the information presented, including any SSC recommendations, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Review: Gulf of Mexico Gag Health Check

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will review a presentation by the SEFSC on the 2023 Gulf gag grouper interim analysis (IA), using data through 2022. These data were prepared to help inform the SSC about the condition of the Gulf gag grouper stock, for which the catch limits were greatly reduced following the 2022 SEDAR 72 stock assessment. SEDAR 72 estimated the stock to be overfished and undergoing overfishing as of 2019. This IA for Gulf gag grouper was provided as a “health check” of the stock, since the catch limits for gag grouper were modified via Reef Fish Amendment 56 in June of 2023, but have not yet been implemented. The AP should evaluate the information presented, including any SSC recommendations, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: Discussion: Reef Fish Framework Action: Modifications to Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Retention Limits and Commercial Spawning Season Closure

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will review possible management alternatives for a framework action for gag and black grouper. The Council is still considering which actions and alternatives to include, and has requested AP input on the evaluation of the data included in the document to support these decisions. The AP should consider the information presented, SSC recommendations, and the aforementioned research presentations on gag, and make any recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XI: *Update: Draft Amendment 58: Modification to Shallow-water Grouper Complex Composition, IFQ Share Allocation, Catch Limits, and Accountability Measures*

Action: *None*

Committee input and next steps: This item will be reviewed by the AP at a future meeting.

Agenda Item XII: Discussion: Draft Framework Action: Modifications to Recreational and Commercial Greater Amberjack Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will review a presentation considering modifications to recreational (fixed closed seasons) and commercial management measures (trip limits) for greater amberjack. These measures are being considered to facilitate access to the stock while the stock rebuilds. The AP should evaluate the measures proposed and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: Review: Vermilion Snapper Interim Analysis

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will summarize a presentation to the SSC by the SEFSC on the 2023 Gulf vermilion snapper IA, using data through 2022. These data were prepared to help inform the SSC about the general condition of the Gulf vermilion snapper stock, which was estimated to be healthy as of 2017 by the SEDAR 67 stock assessment. This IA is intended to be suitable for modifying catch advice. The AP should evaluate the information presented, including any SSC recommendations, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIV: Review: Lane Snapper Updated Catch Analysis

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will summarize a presentation to the SSC by the SEFSC on the 2023 Gulf lane snapper catch analysis, using data through 2022. These data were prepared to help inform the SSC about the general condition of the Gulf lane snapper stock, which is currently evaluated periodically using an index-based method from the NOAA Data Limited Toolkit (iTarget). This analysis is intended to be suitable for modifying catch advice. The AP should evaluate the information presented, including any SSC recommendations, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XV: Presentation: Draft Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 / Reef Fish Amendment 55: Catch Level Adjustments and Allocations for Southeastern U.S. Yellowtail Snapper

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will review the proposed management alternatives for Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 / Reef Fish Amendment 55, which evaluates modifications to Southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper management. The South Atlantic Council will also be evaluating sector allocations and other management measures to be applicable within its jurisdiction; the Gulf does not currently have a sector allocation for yellowtail snapper. The AP should review the proposed management actions and alternatives, ask questions, and provide feedback to the Gulf Council as appropriate. Staff plan to bring a revised document back to the Gulf Council in October 2023 after the South Atlantic Council reviews the amendment at its September meeting.

Agenda Item XVI: *Discussion: Draft Generic Amendment: Regulatory Streamlining*

Action: *None*

Committee input and next steps: *This item will be reviewed by the AP at a future meeting.*

Agenda Item XVII: Public Comment

Action: Information

Committee input and next steps: Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item XVIII: Other Business

Action: Discussion

Committee Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by SSC members, time permitting. If the SSC wishes to pursue action on those additional items, it can be scheduled for a future SSC meeting.