

**Reef Fish Committee  
Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab B**

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**Agenda Item IV:** Draft Options: Modification of Mid-Water Snapper Complex Composition and Catch Limits

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Council input and next steps:** Council staff will present draft options for consideration of removal of wenchman from the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Wenchman are in the mid-water snapper complex, which also includes blackfin snapper, queen snapper, and silk snapper. A recent spike in landings occurred in 2020 and 2021; the mid-water snapper complex closed early in 2021 due to landings exceeding the complex ACL. The recent increases in landings are attributed to additional wenchman landed incidentally from the state-managed commercial mid-water trawl fishery targeting butterfish. Subsequent discussion of wenchman and mid-water snapper complex landings led to Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommendations in May 2023 to remove wenchman from the mid-water snapper complex, and to set a new overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the mid-water snapper complex, excluding wenchman. This was followed by a Council motion in June 2023 to develop a document to consider removing wenchman from the Reef Fish FMP. The Committee should consider the current options in the document, landings data, and the criteria for whether a species requires federal conservation and management, and provide feedback to staff and the Council.

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**Agenda Item V:** Draft Options: Gag Grouper Management Measure

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Council input and next steps:** Council staff will review a revised presentation of the effects of modifying the recreational daily bag limit for gag from two fish per person to one fish per person. Effects will be described as the difference in the projected recreational fishing season duration between these two scenarios. The Committee should consider the information presented and make any recommendations to the Council as appropriate, including whether to proceed with the development of this management modification.

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**Agenda Item VI:** **Final Action:** Draft Abbreviated Framework Action: Modifications to Catch Limits for Gulf of Mexico Lane Snapper

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Council input and next steps:** The Committee should review any public comments received. Council staff will summarize the draft abbreviated framework action, and Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will review the codified text. Once the Committee has selected a preferred

option, the Committee should consider forwarding the document to full Council for final action, recommend that the Council deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, and give staff editorial license to make any necessary changes in the document.

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**Agenda Item VII:** Requirements for Participation in Individual Fishing Quota Programs

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Council input and next steps:** Council and SERO staff will give a presentation on goals and objectives of the red snapper and grouper/tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) programs and on regulatory actions that will be developed in response to Council motions approved during the October 2023 meeting. The presentation includes an introductory discussion of an amendment to the Reef Fish FMP addressing changes to requirements to participate in IFQ programs (Reef Fish Amendment 59). Staff will discuss a draft purpose and need and potential actions to include in Amendment 59. Potential actions include requirements to open and maintain IFQ shareholder accounts and options to ascertain the active participation of IFQ shareholder account holders. Additional actions include requirements to acquire, hold, or maintain IFQ shares and annual allocations. Divestment measures applicable to IFQ participants that would not meet the participation requirements or activity thresholds are also considered. The Committee should review the information presented, suggest revisions or additions and determine next steps.

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**Agenda Item VIII:** Review of 2023 Gulf Red Grouper Recreational Landings and Quota Closure

**Action:** Discussion and recommendations

**Council input and next steps:** SERO staff will review the 2023 Gulf red grouper recreational landings, with special attention paid to those landings from wave 4 (July and August). The Marine Recreational Information Program’s landings estimate for this wave in 2023 was considerably larger than the previous three waves (Jan-Feb, Mar-Apr, and May-Jun) combined. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and provide feedback as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item IX:** Other Business

**Action:** Additional items that can be brought up for discussion

**Council Input and Next Steps:** Additional items may be brought up for discussion by Committee members during the adoption of the agenda, time permitting. If the Committee wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future Council meeting.

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