

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

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

Timeline Status: Information only

Council input and next steps: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provides this update on the status of reef fish and individual fishing quota (IFQ) program landings relative to catch limits, which is provided for the Committee’s information only. This ongoing report to the Council requires no action by the Committee.

Agenda Item V: Draft Framework Action: Modification of Gulf of Mexico Red Grouper Catch Limits

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Staff will review the proposed management alternatives in the draft framework action. The Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed an updated interim acceptable biological catch (ABC) analysis (IA) for Gulf red grouper, using data through 2020 and updated recreational weight estimates, at its August 2021 meeting. This draft framework action follows the SSC’s recommendations for updated catch advice for Gulf red grouper, set using the sector allocations established in Amendment 53 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The SSC Representative will be on hand to answer questions about the IA and the SSC’s deliberations on the subject. The Committee should review and provide direction to staff about the appropriateness of the purpose and need and proposed management alternatives and provide any other feedback.

~~**Agenda Item VI:** Presentation on Greater Amberjack Calibrated Landings and Catch Limits, and Proposed Management Alternatives~~

~~**Timeline Status:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations~~

~~**Council input and next steps:** The Committee will receive a presentation that will summarize the most recent commercial and recreational landings data for informing updated sector allocations, which is necessary to incorporate the results of the SEDAR 70 stock assessment on Gulf greater amberjack into management. These data have been used to inform updated yield projections scenarios for the Council’s consideration for revising the sector allocation for Gulf greater amberjack. The Committee should review and provide direction to staff about the appropriateness of the proposed management alternatives, making edits where necessary. The SSC Representative will be on hand to answer questions about the IA and the SSC’s deliberations on the subject.~~

Agenda Item VII: Discussion of Implementation of the DESCEND Act of 2020

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Mr. Andy Strelcheck (NMFS) and Ms. Mara Levy (NOAA General Counsel) will discuss how NMFS intends to implement the DESCEND Act of 2020. The Committee should ask questions and provide recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item VIII: Updates of 2021 Red Snapper State Management Programs

Timeline Status: Presentations and discussion

Council input and next steps: Representatives from each of the five Gulf states will provide a brief review of their management of red snapper for the private angling component of the recreational sector. These updates may include landings known to date, trends in fishing effort, projected season durations, and any proposed modifications to state management programs. The Committee should consider the information presented and ask questions of the representatives of each Gulf state as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Discussion of Final Document – Framework Action: Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Data Calibration and Recreational Catch Limits

Timeline Status: Document and discussion

Council input and next steps: At its April 2021 meeting, the Council took final action on the Framework Action for the Reef Fish FMP: Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Data Calibration and Recreational Catch Limits. This document revised the calibration method used to establish the individual catch limits for red snapper for the private angling component of the recreational sector, as allocated to each Gulf state. The methods contained therein establish a common data currency for establishing and monitoring those catch limits. In its review of the framework action as using the best scientific information available, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) provided three comments for edits to be made to the document; staff quickly addressed the first and third comments. However, the second comment referred to the implementation date established in Preferred Alternative 2 of Action 1, stating that not implementing Preferred Alternative 2 until January 1, 2023, would continue to permit catch overages for the private angling component of the recreational sector. The SEFSC recommended revising the implementation date for Preferred Alternative 2 to January 1, 2022; if the Council cannot agree to that remedy, then the SEFSC recommended adding implementation dates of January 1, 2023, to Alternatives 3 – 5 of Action 1, to ensure the alternatives were commensurate with one another.

Council staff have not yet transmitted this framework action because making this change is outside the scope of the intent expressed by the Council. As such, the NMFS Southeast Regional Office has asked that the Council reconsider this framework action to address this comment by

the SEFSC, to ensure that the framework action is consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Agenda Item X: Reef Fish Amendments 36B and 36C: Modifications to Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Programs

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will review the public hearing draft of Amendment 36B, which was first prepared for the Council’s August 2020 meeting and was reviewed in part at the June 2021 Council meeting. Staff will also review Amendment 36C, which the Council last reviewed at its January 2020 meeting. Recommendations from the Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel that the Council has yet to review will be provided as well. The Committee should discuss Amendment 36B including the new actions regarding how permit-exempt shareholder accounts may be used, and should modify the alternatives, as appropriate. The Committee should discuss Amendment 36C and consider how its actions are interrelated with Amendment 36B, and provide guidance to staff relative to the further development of actions.

Agenda Item XI: Discussion: Draft Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 and Reef Fish Amendment 55: Modifications to Southeastern U.S. Yellowtail Snapper Jurisdictional Allocations, Catch Limits, and South Atlantic Sector Annual Catch Limits

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will provide a brief overview to the Committee on the impetus and current direction for a combined South Atlantic Snapper Grouper and Gulf Reef Fish amendment, which will modify the southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper jurisdictional allocation, regional catch limits, and South Atlantic sector allocation and sector annual catch limits. These modifications are based on the results of the SEDAR 64 stock assessment, which determined that southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper is not overfished or undergoing overfishing. However, the SEDAR 64 corrected estimate of spawning stock biomass from the last assessment (SEDAR 27A) has resulted in a reduction in the estimate of total biomass, and thus in the catch limits, from the status quo. The Committee should consider the information presented and make recommendations to the Councils as appropriate.

Agenda Item XII: Presentation on Sector Separation for Four Reef Fish Species

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will present a paper on sector separation for four reef fish species (red grouper, gag, greater amberjack, and gray triggerfish). The paper was initially

prepared in response to a September 2020 Council motion but the discussion was postponed. The Committee is expected to review the information presented, including historical landings and effort by mode for each species, and request additional information as warranted. The Committee is also expected to recommend next steps as deemed necessary.

Agenda Item IX: Other Business

Timeline Status: 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.
