

**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: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will review 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. In addition, Council staff will review recent gray triggerfish commercial landings and provide a review of related commercial management measures. The landings data presented are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee.

Agenda Item V: **Final Action:** 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 Council’s preferred management alternative in the draft framework action. 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). Dr. Jim Nance (SSC Chair) will be on hand to answer questions about the SSC’s deliberations on the subject. Council staff will summarize written public comments received, and SERO staff will review the codified text for the Council’s preferred alternative. The Committee should review and provide direction to staff about the appropriateness of the purpose and need and preferred alternative, and provide any other feedback. If the Committee thinks the preferred alternative is necessary and appropriate, then the Committee can recommend that the Council take final action on the draft framework action.

Agenda Item VI: Presentation on SEDAR 70: Greater Amberjack Stock Assessment Report

Timeline Status: Presentation and discussion

Council input and next steps: Dr. Nance will summarize the SSC’s deliberations about the revised projections for the SEDAR 70 stock assessment for greater amberjack. The SEDAR 70 assessment was presented at the SSC’s January 2021 meeting, and estimated that greater amberjack was overfished and experiencing overfishing as of 2018. The assessment used updated recreational catch and effort data from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES). New projections code now in use by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) was proposed for use with greater amberjack at the SSC’s August 2021 meeting, and reviewed at the SSC’s September 2021 meeting. During its November

2021 meeting, the SSC is expected to decide on any changes to stock status, various allocation scenarios and corresponding overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch yield stream projections for greater amberjack. The Committee should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Presentation on SEDAR 72: Gag Grouper Stock Assessment Report

Timeline Status: Presentation and discussion

Council input and next steps: Dr. Nance will summarize the SSC’s deliberations about the SEDAR 72 stock assessment for gag grouper. The SEDAR 72 assessment was presented at the SSC’s September 2021 meeting, and estimated that gag grouper was overfished and experiencing overfishing as of 2019. The assessment used updated recreational catch and effort data from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES), and an ecosystem-informed model for incorporating episodic mortality from red tide. New projection code now in use by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) was proposed for use with gag grouper and reviewed at the SSC’s September 2021 meeting. During its November 2021 meeting, the SSC is expected to decide on any changes to stock status and corresponding overfishing and acceptable biological catch yield stream projections for gag grouper. The Committee should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate. The Committee should also consider if it wants to request alternative allocation scenarios and provide direction to staff so that a memo can be sent to the SEFSC with the request for the January 2022 SSC meeting.

Agenda Item VIII: 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 present a summary of proposed management actions under consideration for Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 / Reef Fish Amendment 55, which will be a joint amendment to both fishery management plans for the Councils’ management of southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper. The yellowtail snapper stock was found to be healthy during the Councils’ SSC review of the SEDAR 64 stock assessment, which used data through 2017 and incorporated recreational catch and effort data from MRIP-FES. The Committee should consider the management alternatives proposed and make recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Programs

Timeline Status: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: The Committee will receive a presentation from members of the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on the Use of Limited Access Privilege Programs in Mixed-Use Fisheries. The Committee may ask questions following the presentation. Next, Mr. Strelcheck will review the proposal for the formation of a focus group to address changes to the IFQ programs. The Committee should discuss the proposal and advise staff whether to begin the application process.

Agenda Item X: Draft Framework Action: Modification of Vermilion Snapper Catch Limits

Timeline Status: Discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present a draft framework action addressing modifications to the Gulf of Mexico vermilion snapper overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), and annual catch limit (ACL). The Committee should discuss the management alternatives presented and suggest revisions if warranted. The Committee is expected to discuss next steps for the further development of this framework action.

Agenda Item XI: Discussion: SSC Recommendation on Final GRSC Report and LDWF Red Snapper Abundance Studies

Timeline Status: Discussion and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Dr. Nance will discuss the SSC's deliberations on the finalized report from the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC), and its review of the red snapper abundance study commissioned by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). These studies both evaluate and estimate the absolute abundance of red snapper in the Gulf, with the GRSC study covering U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters, and the LDWF study focusing on Louisiana and adjacent federal waters. The Committee should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item XII: 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.
