

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

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

Action: 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, Dr. Cody with the NOAA Office of Science and Technology will brief the Committee on the progress made thus far by the MRIP Transition Team on its work related to the calibration of private vessel landings collected by the Gulf state surveys. These data are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee.

Agenda Item V: Review of State-specific Private Angling and State For-Hire Red Snapper Landings

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council representatives from the five Gulf States will review their 2022 private angling seasons for red snapper and offer projections for the rest of the 2022 fishing season as appropriate. These data are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee. The states will also characterize available data for observed mean lengths and weights. Committee members should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item VI: **FINAL ACTION:** Draft Amendment 54: Modifications to the Greater Amberjack Catch Limits and Sector Allocations, and other Rebuilding Plan Modifications

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council Staff will review management alternatives considered in Draft Amendment 54 to the Reef Fish fishery management plan, which considers modifications to sector allocations and catch limits in response to the results of the SEDAR 70 stock assessment. SEDAR 70 determined that greater amberjack was overfished and experiencing overfishing as of the end of the 2018 fishing year, and that reductions in harvest would be necessary to immediately end overfishing and rebuild the stock by 2027 as required by the current rebuilding plan. SEDAR 70 incorporated new recreational catch and effort data calibrated to the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES). These alternatives follow the SSC’s recommendations for updated catch advice. Staff will also review recommendations provided by the Council’s Reef Fish Advisory Panel (RFAP) at its

October 2022 meeting. The Committee should review the information presented, confirm current preferred alternatives and make recommendations on the remaining alternatives, and other recommendations as appropriate. Staff will provide a summary of written and public hearing comments received. Finally, the Committee should consider recommending that the Council take final action on the document and submit it to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation.

Agenda Item VII: Modifications to Recreational and Commercial Greater Amberjack Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council staff will review a presentation considering modifications to recreational and commercial management measures for greater amberjack, including modifying recreational fixed closed seasons, recreational minimum size limits and commercial trip limits. These measures are being considered to reduce the exploitation rate of greater amberjack while continuing to allow access to the stock. Staff will also review recommendations provided by the Council’s RFAP at its October 2022 meeting. The Committee should evaluate the measures proposed and recommend modifications as appropriate.

Agenda Item VIII: IFQ Focus Group

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will inform the Council on its progress towards convening a second meeting of the IFQ Focus Group, including issues that have arisen. The Committee should discuss the proposed meeting and confirm whether staff should move forward with convening the meeting. The Committee may wish to make changes to the meeting charge, if appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Presentation on Framework Action for Modifying the Gray Triggerfish Commercial Trip Limit

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present on potential management measure changes for adjusting commercial gray triggerfish trip limits and review the recommendations provided by the Council’s RFAP at its October 2022 meeting. Recently, the Council decided to increase the gray triggerfish annual catch limits (ACLs), which was implemented in July of 2021. Commercial fishermen have requested that a potential increase in the commercial trip limit be explored to allow the commercial sector to reach its quota. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: Draft Options for Amendment 56: Modifications to the Gag Grouper Catch Limits, Sector Allocations, and Fishing Seasons

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: In June 2022, SERO staff presented options to the Council for a proposed interim rule for gag grouper, which is intended to reduce fishing mortality ahead of the development and implementation of Amendment 56, which will be a rebuilding plan for gag grouper. SERO staff will provide a brief update on the development of this interim rule. At its July 2022 meeting, the Council's SSC reviewed the alternative run using the SEDAR 72 base model, but supplanting the previously used Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES) calibrated recreational catch and effort data with the same from the State of Florida's State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS Run). The SRFS Run also found gag grouper to be overfished and undergoing overfishing, and was determined by the SSC to be consistent with the best scientific information available using a proxy for maximum sustainable yield (MSY) of the fishing mortality rate at 40% of the spawning potential ratio ($F_{40\%SPR}$). The SSC thought this higher target MSY proxy would allow the stock to rebuild to a more robust population size, which would allow the stock to better weather episodic mortality events like red tide. Council staff will present options for modifications to catch limits and the sector allocation, and for modifying the recreational fishing season. The Committee should ask questions and make recommendations as appropriate. Staff will also review recommendations provided by the Council's RFAP at its October 2022 meeting. Council staff will plan to bring a public hearing draft of the amendment to the Council's January 2023 meeting.

Agenda Item XI: SSC Recommendations: Review of the SEDAR 68 Operational Assessment for Gulf of Mexico Scamp

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Dr. Sean Powers (Standing SSC Member) will summarize the SSC's review of the SEDAR 68 operational assessment of Gulf scamp and yellowmouth grouper. These species were assessed concurrently due to extreme difficulty in discerning between the two at smaller sizes during dockside intercepts, and similar life history characteristics. The SSC received a presentation on SEDAR 68 at its September 2022 meeting from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). The SSC found SEDAR 68 to be consistent with the best scientific information available. Although the assessment originally used an MSY proxy of $F_{30\%SPR}$, the SSC asked that the SEFSC also produce a run using $F_{40\%SPR}$, considerate of the species' life histories, increased rate of exploitation of the stocks in recent years, and empirical studies demonstrating the benefits of managing stocks like groupers to a higher MSY proxy. Under both presented proxies for MSY, SEDAR 68 estimated that scamp and yellowmouth grouper are not overfished and are not undergoing overfishing as of 2020. Before projections of OFL and ABC can be determined, the SSC requests clarification from the Council about how it foresees the future of scamp and yellowmouth grouper management, considerate of the species' inclusion in the other shallow-water grouper complex, and in the

commercial IFQ program. Staff will also review recommendations provided by the Council's RFAP at its October 2022 meeting. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item XII: Reef Fish AP Recommendations from October 2022 Meeting

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will review remaining items from the summary report from the October 11, 2022, meeting of the RFAP in Tampa, including a discussion of the results of the recent update to the SEDAR64 assessment of southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper and the U.S. Coast Guard inspection requirements for Gulf federal commercial reef fish permits. The Committee should discuss the RFAP's recommendations and make any of its own to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: 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.
