



Draft Reef Fish Amendment 58: Modifications to the Shallow-water Grouper Complex

August 15, 2023

Background of SWG Complex

- Amendment 1 (1990) created the shallow-water grouper (SWG) complex
 - 10 species were included: black grouper, gag, red grouper, Nassau grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, rock hind, red hind, speckled hind, and scamp
- Amendment 3 (1991) transferred speckled hind from the SWG to the deep-water grouper complex.



Background of SWG Complex

- Amendment 14 (1997) prohibited the harvest of Nassau grouper
- Generic ACL/AM Amendment (2012):
 - Removed rock hind and red hind from the FMP
 - Established separate ACLs for gag and red grouper
 - Set ACLs for all other species without prior ACLs



Background of SWG Complex

- Currently, 4 species are included in the shallow-water grouper complex
 - Black grouper, yellowfin grouper, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper
 - All 4 species are contained within the “Other Shallow-water Grouper” share category in the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program



Background: SSC Motions

- March 2023 SSC Meeting: Scamp and YMG
- The SSC accepted updated projections SEDAR 68, and recommended that the OFL be set at $F_{40\%SPR}$ and ABC as the yield (mp gw) at $0.75 * F_{40\%SPR}$

Year	OFL (mp gw)	ABC (mp gw)
2024	0.271	0.203
2025	0.263	0.203
2026+	0.257	0.203

In FES



Background: SSC Motions

- May 2023 SSC Meeting: Black and yellowfin grouper
 - Lack of fishery-independent data available
 - Very high uncertainty in recreational landings data
 - Most landings from FL; renewed comm. pressure re: gag?
- The SSC recommended using Tier 3a for setting the OFL (mean + 2* SD) and option A for the ABC (mean + 1.5 *SD) using landings from 2010-2021

Catch Level	Lb gw
OFL	359,255
ABC	307,752

In FES



Background: Council Motions

- June 2023 Council Meeting:
- To direct staff to modify the amendment for scamp and yellowmouth grouper OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs to include black grouper and yellowfin grouper SSC catch recommendations. In the amendment, consideration should be given also to implications to the IFQ fishery involving the shallow-water grouper complex.



Possible Management Actions: Modify SWG Complex

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current composition of the SWG complex: scamp, yellowmouth grouper, black grouper, and yellowfin grouper.
- **Alternative 2:** Modify the composition of the SWG complex to form two sub-complexes. Sub-complex A is comprised of scamp and yellowmouth grouper; sub-complex B is comprised of black grouper and yellowfin grouper. ***Note: This would require dissolving the current “other SWG” share category and create 2 new share categories.***



Possible Management Actions: Modify SWG Complex

If SWG complex is split into sub-complexes...

- **Under Alternative 2:**
 - Current shares are applied to the new share categories
 - The original share percentages are based on historical landings from 1999-2004



Possible Management Actions:

Modify IFQ Program Share Allocation for SWG Complex

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the distribution of shares as established for the SWG complex in Amendment 29 for black grouper, yellowfin grouper, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper.
- **Alternative 2:** Disband the SWG share category and create two new share categories: one for black grouper and yellowfin grouper; and, one for scamp and yellowmouth grouper.



Possible Management Actions: Establish SDC for SWG Complex

If SWG complex is split into sub-complexes...

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current SDC for maximum sustainable yield (MSY), maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT), minimum stock size threshold (MSST), and optimum yield (OY) for shallow-water grouper complex as defined in Reef Fish Amendment 48 for the new SWG sub-complexes (A and B).
- $MSY = F_{30\%SPR}$
- $MFMT = F_{MSY}$
- $MSST = 50\% \text{ of } B_{MSY}$
- $OY = 90\% \text{ of } MSY$



Possible Management Actions: Establish SDC for SWG Complex

If SWG complex is split into sub-complexes...

- **Alternative 2:** Modify the MSY proxy for shallow-water sub-complex A (scamp and yellowmouth grouper) to be $F_{40\%SPR}$. Maintain the MSY proxy for shallow-water sub-complex B (black and yellowfin grouper) as $F_{30\%SPR}$. Maintain the current SDC for MFMT, MSST, and OY for SWG as defined in Reef Fish Amendment 48 for the new shallow-water grouper sub-complexes (A and B).
- MFMT = F_{MSY}
- MSST = 50% of B_{MSY}
- OY = 90% of MSY



Possible Management Actions: Sector Allocations

- *De facto* allocation for SWG complex established in Reef Fish Amendment 29:
 - Commercial sector \approx 80.1%, recreational sector \approx 19.9%
 - Applies only to scamp, yellowfin, and yellowmouth grouper combined
 - Based on landings during 2001-2004
 - Black grouper done separately in Generic ACL/AM Amendment (2012)
 - Commercial sector \approx 73%, recreational sector \approx 27%



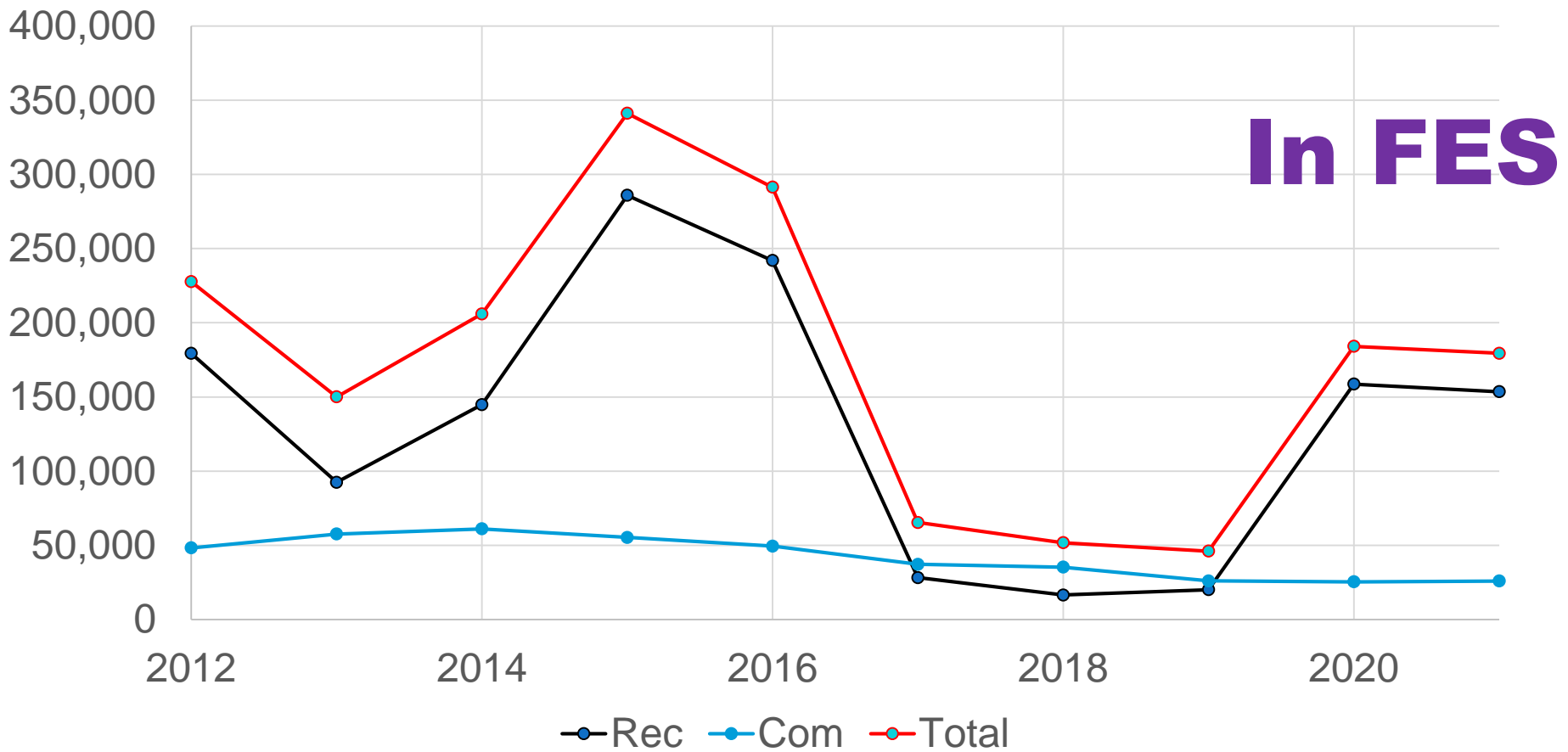
Possible Management Actions: Sector Allocations

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the *de facto* allocation such that the commercial sector takes 80.1% of the scamp, yellowmouth grouper, black grouper, and yellowfin grouper combined, based on landings during 2001-2004.
- **Alternative 2:** Modify the allocation such that the commercial sector is allocated XX.X% of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper, based on landings during 20XX – 20XX. A sector allocation for black and yellowfin grouper will be established separately.
- Use recent time series?
- Exclude 2020? Could exclude 2010 with DWH oil spill.
- Constrain to IFQ years?



Reminder: Black and YFG landings

Total BG & YFG landings (lb gw), 2012 - 2021



Possible Management Actions: Scamp and YMG Catch Limits

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current catch limits for the SWG complex. The ABC = 0.710 mp gw. The commercial ACL = 0.547 mp gw, and the commercial ACT = 0.526 mp gw. The recreational ACL and ACT are undefined.
- *Alternative 1 is not viable because it uses MRFSS data units, and because the SSC has established separate OFLs and ABCs for scamp and YMG, and for black and yellowfin grouper. Alternative 1 is not consistent with BSIA.*



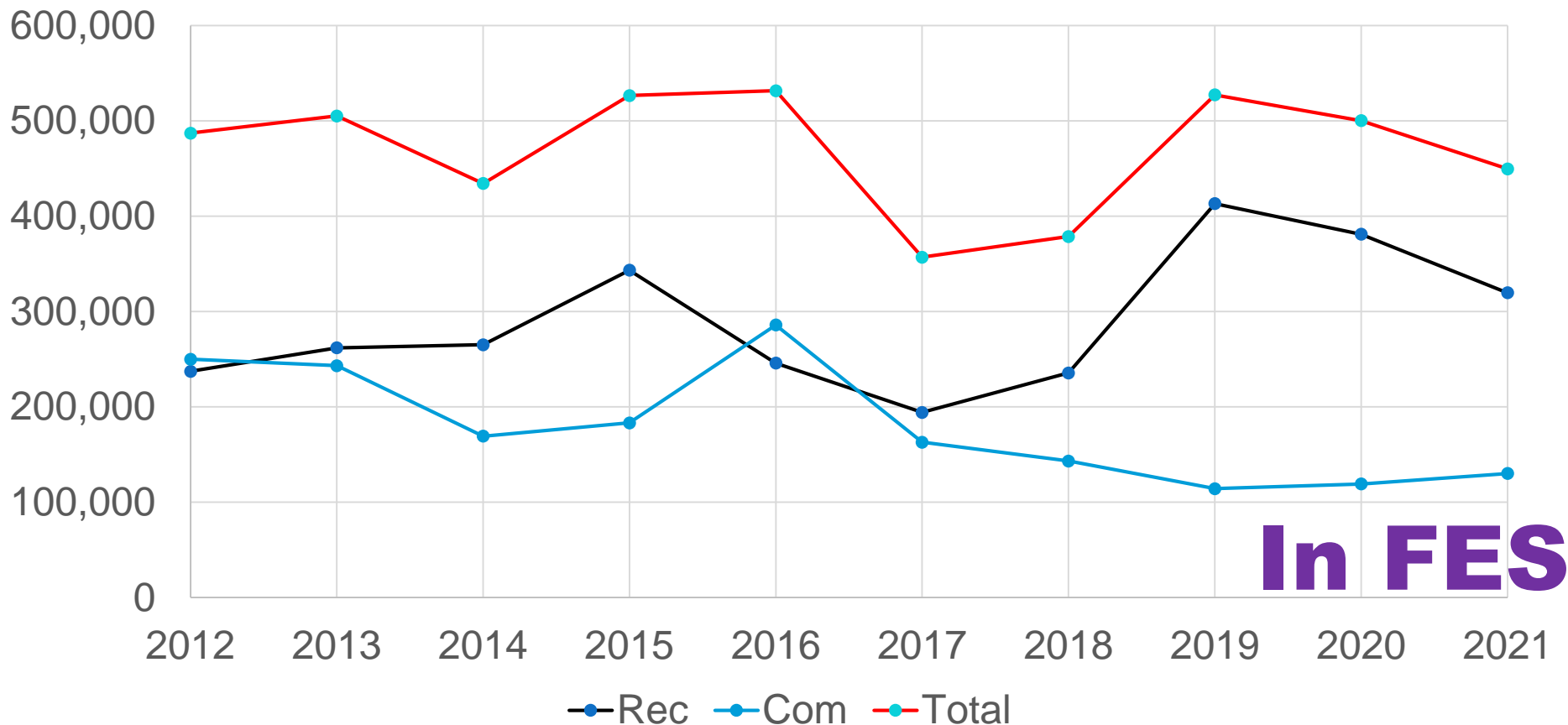
Possible Management Actions: Scamp and YMG Catch Limits

- **Alternative 2:** Establish catch limits for scamp and YMG based on the SSC's recommendations from SEDAR 68 (2022) for 2024 – 2026 and subsequent years. Catch limits are expressed and will be monitored in MRIP-FES data units, and in mp gw.

Year	OFL	ABC	Com ACL	Rec ACL
2024	0.271	0.203	<i>Depends on sector allocation</i>	
2025	0.263	0.203		
2026+	0.257	0.203		

Possible Management Actions: Scamp and YMG Catch Limits

Total Scamp and YMG Landings (lb gw), 2012 – 2021



Possible Management Actions: Black Grouper Sector Allocations

- Black grouper assessed jointly and split with SAFMC
 - South Atlantic = 47% of ABC and Gulf = 53% of ABC (Established by using 50% of catch history from 1986-2008 + 50% of catch history from 2006-2008).
- Black grouper sector allocation established in Generic ACL/AM Amendment:
 - Use the Gulf Council's allocated acceptable biological catch (ABC) and divide the ACL between the commercial and recreational sector based on average landings from 2004-2008: Recreational \approx 27% of ACL and Commercial \approx 73% of ACL



Possible Management Actions: Black Grouper Sector Allocations

- Black grouper commercial landings are down, but may increase with recent increases in dockside ex-vessel price
- Change in data units from MRFSS to MRIP-FES expected to affect sector allocation if re-using previous time series
- In practice, no sector allocation for black grouper at present-combined with other SWG
- Yellowfin grouper would be lumped in with black grouper
 - Landings of yellowfin grouper comparatively low (<1,000s of lbs)



Possible Management Actions: Black Grouper Sector Allocations

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current sector allocation for black grouper from the Generic ACL/AM Amendment, based on average landings from 2004-2008. Divide the Gulf Council's apportionment of the stock ACL: Recreational \approx 27% and commercial \approx 73% of Gulf ACL.
- **Modify Sector Allocations:**
 - Determine historical time series of landings for black and yellowfin grouper
 - Consider alternative allocation approaches



Possible Management Actions: Black and Yellowfin Catch Limits

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current catch limits for the SWG complex. The ABC = 0.710 mp gw. The commercial ACL = 0.547 mp gw, and the commercial ACT = 0.526 mp gw. The recreational ACL and ACT are undefined
- *Alternative 1 is not viable because it uses MRFSS data units, and because the SSC has established separate OFLs and ABCs for scamp and YMG, and for black and yellowfin grouper. Alternative 1 is not consistent with BSIA.*



Possible Management Actions: Black and Yellowfin Catch Limits

- **Alternative 2:** Establish catch limits for black grouper and yellowfin grouper within the SWG complex based on the SSC's recommendations for 2024 and subsequent years. Catch limits are expressed and will be monitored in MRIP-FES data units, and in lb gw.

Year	OFL	ABC	Com ACL	Rec ACL
2024+	359,255	307,752	<i>Depends on black and yellowfin grouper sector allocation</i>	

Possible Management Actions:

Modify Accountability Measures for SWG Complex

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current accountability measures (AMs) for both sub-complexes in the SWG complex. For the commercial sector, the IFQ program serves as the AM. For the recreational sector, if the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceeds the SWG complex ACL, then during the following fishing year, if the sum of the commercial and recreational landings reaches or is projected to reach the SWG complex ACL, NMFS will close the recreational sector for the remainder of that fishing year.
- Landings show substantial inter-annual variability in SWG landings, especially for black grouper
- Landings trends concurrent with other “rare-event” species monitored by MRIP-FES



Possible Management Actions: Modify Accountability Measures for SWG Complex

- **Alternative 2:** Modify the current AMs for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and black and yellowfin grouper, respectively. For the commercial sector, the IFQ program serves as the AM.

For the recreational sector, if a recreational ACL is established and is exceeded more than once during the three most recent fishing years, then in the following fishing year, NMFS will monitor the recreational landings and close harvest when that recreational ACL is projected to be met.

- Provides additional flexibility given the variability of the landings of SWG species



Possible Management Actions:

Modify IFQ Program Flexibility Considerations

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program flexibility considerations for the sub-complexes within the SWG complex. Scamp may be landed under a shareholder's DWG allocation if that shareholder does not have any remaining SWG allocation. Warsaw and speckled hind may be landed under SWG if all DWG allocation in a shareholder's account is depleted.

Alternative 1 is not viable because the SSC has established separate OFLs and ABCs for scamp and YMG, and for black and yellowfin grouper. Without modification, allowing for scamp to be landed under DWG allocation could result in overfishing of scamp. Alternative 1 is not consistent with BSIA.



Possible Management Actions:

Modify IFQ Program Flexibility Considerations

- **Alternative 2:** Eliminate the flexibility considerations for the share categories within the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program.
- **Alternative 3:** Modify the flexibility considerations in the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program for the SWG and DWG complex.
 - Scamp and YMG landings expected to use up all of that ACL without flexibility considerations
 - Black grouper landings could increase
 - High recent ex-vessel prices (about \$8/lb gw)
 - Low availability of gag quota



Questions?

