

Modifications to the greater amberjack recreational fixed closed season and commercial trip limit



Presentation Overview

- **Background**
- **Review of purpose and need**
- **Review of document actions**
 - Action 1: Modify the recreational fixed closed season
 - Preferred selected (Alternative 2)
 - Action 2: Modify the commercial trip limit
 - Modified limit as number of fish instead of a trip weight
- **Discussion and feedback**



Background

- **Amendment 54 Council went final Oct 2022**
 - Catch limits markedly reduced for both sectors; reduced total stock ACL by approximately 79% relative to previous ACL
 - Revised sector allocations using MRIP-FES adjusted average landings from 1993-2019 (20% comm; 80% rec)
- **Emergency rule for recreational season**
 - 2022/2023 season: Open Sept and Oct 2022; not open May 2023
 - Effective through July 28, 2023
 - Open Aug 1, 2023 and close Aug 25 (NMFS projects ACT will be met)
- **Framework action to modify management measures (2024 at earliest)**
 - Action 1: Modify the recreational fixed closed season
 - Action 2: Modify the commercial trip limit

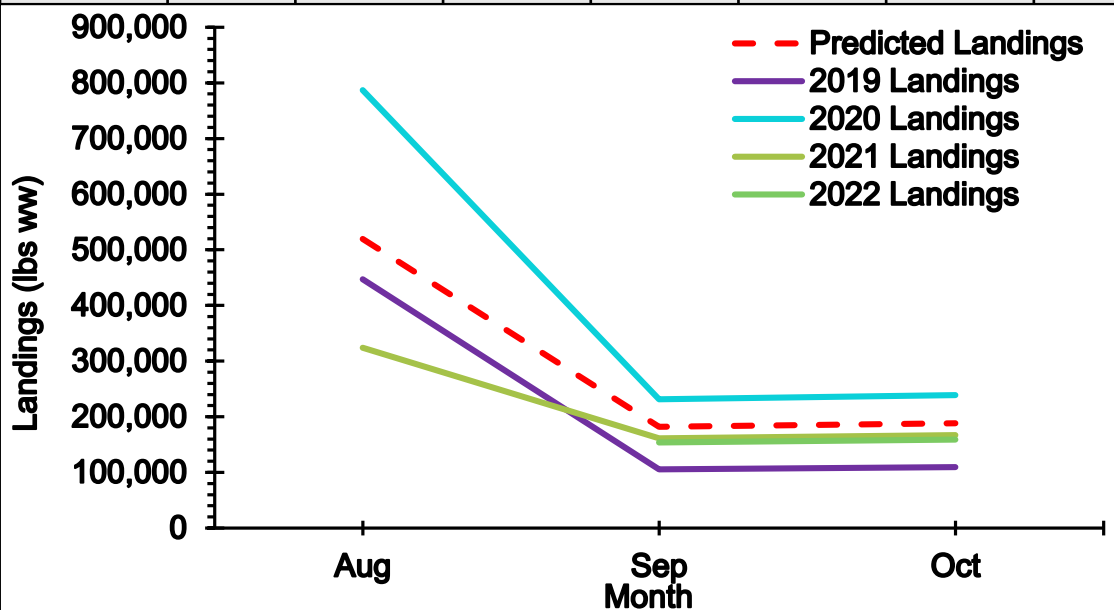
Purpose and need

- Purpose: The purpose of this framework action is to modify the greater amberjack recreational fixed-closed season and commercial trip limit to extend the fishing season durations. Additionally, a modification to the recreational season is needed to reduce the likelihood of exceeding the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and eliminate harvest during the spawning period.
- Need: The need for this framework action is to maintain recreational and commercial access to the greater amberjack component of the reef fish fishery, given the substantial ACL decreases under Amendment 54, which are consistent with the objectives of the greater amberjack rebuilding plan.

Action 1: Rec fixed closed season

- **Alt 1:** No action. Open Aug. 1 – Oct. 31; May 1 – May 31
- **Preferred Alt 2:** Open September 1 – October 31
- **Alt 3:** Open September 1 – September 30 and May 1 -31

Alt	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July
1	OPEN			x	x	x	x	x	x	OPEN	x	x
Prefer 2	x	OPEN		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	x	OPEN	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	OPEN	x	x



Alt	ACT Met Date	Est. Days Open
1	Aug 21	21
Preferred 2	Oct 26	56
3	May 18	49

- Amendment 54
 - Rec ACL = 404,000
 - Rec ACT = 335,320

Action 2: Commercial trip limit

■ Background

- Fishing year begins Jan 1. with fixed closure March 1 – May 31
- Implemented in 2020: Trip limit from 1,500 lbs gw to 1,000 lbs gw with step down to 250 lbs ww when 75% of the commercial ACL is harvested
 - Step down has not been triggered since implementation

■ Fish numbers vs weights

- Both the Reef Fish AP and Law Enforcement TC have recommended setting trip limits as number of fish rather than pounds. Easier to count and enforce.

■ Amendment 54

- Comm ACL = 101, 000 (lbs ww)
- Comm ACT = 93,930 (lbs ww)

Action 2: Commercial trip limit

- **Alt 1:** No action. Trip limit of 1,040 lbs ww; when 75% of ACT is projected to be met, reduce limit to 260 lbs ww
- **Alt 2:** Limit of 8 fish (~ 257 lbs gw [267 lbs ww])
- **Alt 3:** Limit of 7 fish (~ 210 lbs gw [218 lbs ww])
- **Alt 4:** Limit of 5 fish (~ 150 lbs gw [155 lbs ww])

Note: Alternatives 2-4 will establish trip limits in number of fish; however, catch limits will still be monitored in weight. Presented weight values are provided as reference based on an estimated average weight of 32.1 lbs gw (33.4 lbs ww) for an individual commercially harvested greater amberjack.

Action 2: Commercial trip limit average weight analyses (App B)

- Calculation of average weight obtained from Trip Interview Program from 2019-2021 (n=970)
- Average weight of 32.1 lbs gw (33.4 lbs ww)
- No difference across states (App B; Figure 1)
- Also performed analysis for 75th percentile calculation
 - 36.7 lbs gw (38.2 lbs ww)

Action 2: Commercial trip limit estimated season length analyses

Commercial Trip Limit Alternatives	Projected Closure Date	Days Open	Predicted Change in Annual Landings (%)	Proportion of Trips Landing the Trip Limit or less (%)
Alt. 1: No Action	June 3 (Step down – February 4)	61	0.0	93.7
Alt. 2: 8 fish ~257 lbs gw (267 lbs ww)	August 31	150	-53.6	59.3
Alt 3: 7 fish ~225 lbs gw (234 lbs ww)	September 20	170	-57.6	56.6
Alt 4: 5 fish ~161 lbs gw (167 lbs ww)	December 14	255	-66.5	49.6

Assumes average weight of 33.4 lbs ww

Commercial Trip Limit Alternatives	Projected Closure Date	Days Open	Predicted Change in Annual Landings (%)	Proportion of Trips Landing the Trip Limit or less (%)
Alt. 1: No Action	February 27 (Step down – February 4)	57	0.0	93.7
Alt. 2: 8 fish ~294 lbs gw (306 lbs ww)	August 11	130	-49.3	62.4
Alt 3: 7 fish ~257 lbs gw (267 lbs ww)	August 31	150	-53.6	59.3
Alt 4: 5 fish ~184 lbs gw (191 lbs ww)	November 4	215	-63.2	52.2

Assumes 75th percentile weight of 38.2 lbs ww

Action 2: Commercial trip limit

- Amendment 54: Commercial ACT = 93,930 (lbs ww)
- Assuming avg ww of 33.4 lbs ww
- $93,930/33.4 = 2,812$ fish for entire fishing year for entire Gulf

Commercial Trip Limit Alternatives	Projected Closure Date	Days Open	Maximum fish harvested in the Gulf per day (2,812/estimated days open)
Alt. 1: No Action	June 3 (Step down – February 4)	61	N/A
Alt. 2: 8 fish ~257 lbs gw (267 lbs ww)	August 31	150	19
Alt 3: 7 fish ~225 lbs gw (234 lbs ww)	September 20	170	17
Alt 4: 5 fish ~161 lbs gw (167 lbs ww)	December 14	255	11

Action 2: Commercial trip limit

Year	Hook & Line	H&L # of Trips	Bottom Longline	BLL # of Trips	Divers	# of Dive Trips	Total
2017	82.77%	562	8.84%	60	8.39%	57	100.00%
2018	75.93%	306	8.93%	36	15.14%	61	100.00%
2019	75.34%	385	10.37%	53	14.29%	73	100.00%
2020	67.13%	531	21.24%	168	11.63%	92	100.00%
2021	65.90%	541	19.24%	158	14.86%	122	100.00%
Average	73.41%		13.73%		12.86%		100.00%

SEDAR 70 assumed 20% discard mortality for commercial fleet

Discussion and feedback request

- **Committee feedback request**
 - **Action 2**
 - Likely will be a short commercial season, with possibility of out-of-season discards occurring throughout most of year
 - Selection of preferred?
 - **Next steps:**
 - Report back to IPT
 - Revised draft can be brought back in October
 - Committee thoughts on document development timeline?



Questions?

