



Tab B, No. 8(a)



Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 / Reef Fish Amendment 55: **Catch Level Adjustments and Allocations for Southeastern U.S. Yellowtail Snapper**

October Council Meeting 2023



August 2023 Gulf Council Meeting:

- NOAA Office of Science and Technology (OST) discussed the release of an MRIP-FES pilot study* (NOAA 2023)
- Detailed forward-telescoping recall bias in the FES survey
- Conducted for 4 states over 6 months
 - 39% overestimation for private vessels, 32% for shore
- More comprehensive pilot study in 2024, peer-review in 2025, and available for use in 2026
- Implications for multiple stocks including yellowtail snapper – recreational landings, jurisdictional and sector allocations



*<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/fishing-effort-survey-research-and-improvements>

Impacts to Yellowtail Snapper Stock

- Possible implications:
 - Catch levels skewed possibly affecting the jurisdictional allocation (and South Atlantic sector allocation)
 - Simple scaling issue or larger impact to stock status?
- MRIP-FES exposure analysis could be considered highest tier – most exposure
 - Popular recreational fishery across Gulf and SA
 - Potentially mitigated with other data units (SRFS) but not within current planned management changes
 - More complex management – jurisdictional and sector allocations (South Atlantic)
 - Result in additional management restrictions? Already some potential for early closures in SA



Gulf and South Atlantic Recommendations

- Gulf Council (August 2023) noted concerns over altering allocations in light of the MRIP-FES pilot study results.
- **SA Recommendations and Actions:**
- SA adopted similar strategy to Gulf Council regarding MRIP-FES pilot study management implications
- SA Council (September 2023) also considered the results of the pilot survey and requested a re-evaluation of catch limits based on this information.
- Requested a re-run of the assessment by FWC to incorporate SRFS data for both coasts.
- Because this is a joint amendment, ask the Gulf Council to consider consulting the Gulf SSC to take the same action.
 - Letter clarifying intent of SA Council motion provided as background



South Atlantic Letter

SSCs reconsideration of catch advice and prioritization of a new assessment in light of the MRIP-FES pilot study

- Results of pilot study constitute new information that may substantially impact yellowtail management – jurisdictional and sector allocation (SA only)
- FWC is willing and able to update the current stock assessment (SEDAR 64) using SRFS data for Gulf and South Atlantic jurisdictions
- Would be similar approach to what has already been done for Gulf gag grouper
- Comparison of MRIP data to SRFS at mutton snapper workshop determined bias consistent with pilot study findings – same bias present for yellowtail?



RF AP Discussion and Recommendations

- Observing larger average size of yellowtail in Gulf and range expansion
- Gulf quota apportionment needs to remain as high as possible to prevent Gulf closures
- Impact of MRIP-FES on recreational landings and jurisdictional allocation

MOTION: The RF AP recommends that the Council pause work on Reef Fish Amendment 55 until completion of the updated MRIP-FES recreational effort calibrations.

Motion carried unanimously.



Proposed Assessment Timeline

- Need SRFS data through end of 2023 for three full years
- During Fall 2023 SEDAR Steering Committee:
 - *Yellowtail snapper OA was added for late spring/early summer 2024 to include the SRFS data, with a completion date in fall 2024. This could impact the timing for S94 hogfish*
- Late spring/early summer 2024: SRFS calibrated landings using model already reviewed by OST
 - Calibration factors will have to go through review
 - OST already briefed and prepared for this possibility
- Fall (September 2024): Councils' SSCs review YTS update



Considerations

- Stock healthy – not overfished or undergoing overfishing
- If Councils' pause, will allow for time to incorporate SRFS data into new stock assessment
 - Better informing catch limits and allocation decisions
 - Primarily a Florida fishery



Recent Yellowtail Snapper Landings Estimates

GULF

Season	Recreational (MRFSS)	Commercial	Total (lb ww)	Stock ACL	% ACL
2019/2020	5,069	287,940	293,009	901,125	33
2021/2022*	34,139	250,147	284,286	901,125	32
2022/2023*	2,847	124,077	126,924	901,125	14.1

SOUTH ATLANTIC

Season	Recreational (MRFSS)	Recreational ACL	% ACL	Commercial	Commercial ACL	% ACL
2019/2020	492,732	1,440,990	34	1,437,524	1,596,510	90
2021/2022*	521,698	1,440,990	36	1,323,610	1,596,510	83
2022/2023*	446,793	1,440,990	31	1,284,499	1,596,510	80.5

*Preliminary landings

Source: SERO ACL Monitoring



Committee Recommendations

- Need feedback from Council on next steps

