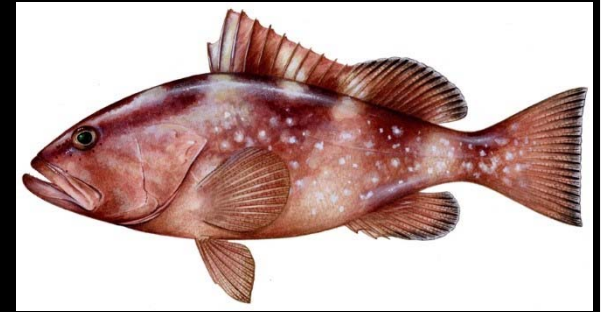


Tab B, No. 9(b)

Draft Reef Fish Amendment 53: Red Grouper Allocations and Annual Catch Levels and Targets



August 2020

Background

- Amendment 53 is being developed to revise the red grouper allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors and modify the total and sector ACLs based on results of the SEDAR 61 2019 stock assessment and subsequent OFL and ABC recommendations from the Council's SSC.
- Acknowledging that the status quo sector allocations are based on the older and no longer used MRFSS data, the Council requested that the SSC examine alternative sector allocation scenarios considering the contemporary FES calibrated MRIP data.
- The SSC reviewed these scenarios in January 2020, and after affirming that SEDAR 61 (which uses the MRIP FES recreational landings estimates) represented the best scientific information available, recommended the projections included in **Alternatives 2-5** of **Action 2** as scientifically valid estimates of OFL and ABC.



FMP Objectives

At its August 2019 meeting, the Council last modified the objectives. Any allocation or reallocation must be consistent with the Reef Fish FMP objectives.

- 1. To prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks.
- 2. To achieve robust fishery reporting and data collection systems across all sectors for monitoring the reef fish fishery, which minimizes scientific, management, and risk uncertainty.
- 3. To conserve and protect reef fish habitat.
- 4. To minimize conflicts between user groups.
- 5. To minimize and reduce dead discards.
- 6. To manage Gulf stocks at OY as defined in MSA.



FMP Objectives

- 7. To revise the definitions of the fishery management unit and fishery to reflect the current species composition of the reef fish fishery.
- 8. To encourage and periodically review research on the efficacy of artificial reefs for management purposes.
- 9. To promote stability in the fishery by allowing for enhanced fisher flexibility and increasing fishing opportunities to the extent practicable.
- 10. To avoid to the extent practicable the "derby" type fishing season.
- 11. To provide for cost-effective and enforceable management of the fishery.
- 12. To promote and maintain accountability in the reef fish fishery.



Action 1

Modify the Sector Allocations, OFL, ABC, and ACLs for Red Grouper

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the sector allocations of the total ACL for red grouper between the commercial and recreational sectors. The allocations for red grouper are 76% commercial and 24% recreational. The allocation was derived from the average landings using Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) data from the years 1986 through 2005, established in Reef Fish Amendment 30B. Maintain the current OFL, ABC, and ACLs.
 - **Alternative 1** is not legally viable because it is not based on the best scientific information available, and would retain the current OFL and ABC, which are above the values produced by the SEDAR 61 stock assessment and recommended by the SSC.



Action 1

- **Alternative 2:** Maintain the sector allocations of the total ACL as 76% commercial and 24% recreational, but revise the OFL and ABC as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) based on Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 61 (2019). Set the stock ACL equal to the stock ABC.
- **Alternative 3:** Revise the sector allocations of the total ACL between the recreational and commercial sectors, as the average landings using Fishing Effort Survey (FES)-adjusted Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP FES) data during the years 1986 through 2005, based on the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) ACL monitoring datasets. The allocations for red grouper are 59.3% commercial and 40.7% recreational. Revise the OFL and ABC as recommended by the SSC based on SEDAR 61 (2019). Set the stock ACL equal to the stock ABC.



Action 1

- **Alternative 4:** Revise the sector allocations of the total ACL between the recreational and commercial sectors, as the average landings using MRIP FES data during the years 1986 through 2009, based on the SEFSC ACL monitoring datasets. The allocations for red grouper are 60.5% commercial and 39.5% recreational. Revise the OFL and ABC as recommended by the SSC based on SEDAR 61 (2019). Set the stock ACL equal to the stock ABC.
- **Alternative 5:** Revise the sector allocations of the total ACL between the recreational and commercial sectors, as the average landings using MRIP FES data during the years 1986 through 2018, based on the SEFSC ACL monitoring datasets. The allocations for red grouper are 59.7% commercial and 40.3% recreational. Revise the OFL and ABC as recommended by the SSC based on SEDAR 61 (2019). Set the stock ACL equal to the stock ABC.



Action 1

	OFL*	ABC	Total ACL	Comm ACL	Rec ACL
Alternative 1**	14.16	13.92	4.16	3.16	1.00
MRIP FES equivalent			(5.26)		(2.10)
Alternative 2***	5.35	4.90	4.90	3.72	1.18
Alternative 3***	4.66	4.26	4.26	2.53	1.73
Alternative 4***	4.70	4.30	4.30	2.60	1.70
Alternative 5***	4.67	4.28	4.28	2.56	1.72

- *Values for OFL, ACB, total ACL, commercial ACL, and recreational ACL are in millions of pounds (mp) gutted weight (gw).
- **The recreational portion of the current OFL, ABC, and ACLs are based on MRIP CHTS data.
- ***The recreational sector ACL is in MRIP FES currency.



Action 2

Modify the Gulf Red Grouper Annual Catch Targets

- **Alternative 1:** No Action – Maintain the current buffer between the ACL and ACT for each sector. The commercial buffer is 5%, and the recreational buffer is 8%.
- **Alternative 2:** Apply the ACL/ACT Control Rule to revise the buffer between the ACL and ACT for each sector. The commercial buffer is 0%, and the recreational buffer is 9%.
- **Alternative 3:** Maintain the current buffer between the ACL and ACT for the commercial sector, and apply the ACL/ACT Control Rule to revise the buffer between the ACL and ACT for the recreational sector. The commercial buffer is 5%, and the recreational buffer is 9%.



Action 2

Commercial and recreational ACTs, based on Action 1 and Action 2 selections

		Action 2					
		Alt 1		Alt 2		Alt 3	
		Comm	Rec	Comm	Rec	Comm	Rec
Action 1	Alt 1	3.00	0.92** (1.93)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Alt 2	3.53	1.09	3.72	1.07	3.53	1.07
	Alt 3	2.40	1.59	2.53	1.57	2.40	1.57
	Alt 4	2.47	1.56	2.60	1.55	2.47	1.55
	Alt 5	2.43	1.58	2.56	1.57	2.43	1.57

- * Values are in millions of pounds, gutted weight and in MRIP FES currency.
- **The recreational sector ACT for Action 1, Alternative 1 is in CHTS currency; the recreational sector ACT in MRIP FES currency is in parentheses.



Next Steps

- On agenda for Reef Fish AP meeting in early October
- Public hearing draft for October Council meeting
- SERO will send a Notice of Availability (NOA) to be published with EPA
 - 45 day clock on comments; takes a week (7 days) to publish after sent

