

Modifications to Gulf Reef Fish and South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans



Draft Joint Generic Amendment DECISION DOCUMENT For the Joint Council Committee on South Florida Management Issues

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DRAFT MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following actions pertain exclusively to yellowtail snapper.

Action 1: Partial Delegation of Commercial and/or Recreational Management of Yellowtail Snapper to the State of Florida for Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

Note: Under this action, the Councils will remain responsible for setting annual catch limits and determining appropriate accountability measures.

Alternative 1: No action. Do not delegate management of yellowtail snapper in the Reef Fish Resources and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for yellowtail snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Alternative 3: Determine specific commercial management items for delegation to the State of Florida for yellowtail snapper:

Option 3a: Size limits

Option 3b: Seasons

Option 3c: Commercial trip limits

Option 3d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

IPT Note: *The IPT recommends determining upper and/or lower bounds for management items being considered for delegation to Florida (Options 2/3 a-c). Also, further detail will be necessary to define “Minor modifications to existing allowable gear”, as analyses are not currently possible without knowing which modifications will be open to consideration by the Councils.*

IPT Note: *The Councils should determine specifically which types of modifications to existing allowable gear will be permitted under this action.*

Action 2: Establish and Consolidate ABCs and ACLs for Yellowtail Snapper

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current commercial and recreational ACLs for yellowtail snapper based on the South Atlantic Council's Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and maintain the current total ACL for yellowtail snapper in the Gulf based on the Reef Fish FMP.

Alternative 2: Manage yellowtail snapper as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional acceptable biological catch (ABC) and annual catch limit (ACL).

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for yellowtail snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 3a: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3b: Base sector allocations on average landings from 2009-2013

Option 3c: Base sector allocations on average landings from 2004-2013

The following actions pertain exclusively to mutton snapper.

Action 3: Partial Delegation of Commercial and/or Recreational Management of Mutton Snapper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

Note: Under this action, the Councils will remain responsible for setting annual catch limits and determining appropriate accountability measures.

Alternative 1: No action. Retain management of Mutton Snapper in the Reef Fish Resources and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Mutton Snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Alternative 3: Determine specific commercial management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Mutton Snapper:

Option 3a: Size limits

Option 3b: Seasons

Option 3c: Commercial trip limits

Option 3d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

IPT Note: *The IPT recommends determining upper and/or lower bounds for management items being considered for delegation to Florida (Options 2/3 a-c). Also, further detail will be necessary to define “Minor modifications to existing allowable gear”, as analyses are not currently possible without knowing which modifications will be open to consideration by the Councils.*

IPT Note: *Delegating the setting of bag limits under Alternatives 2 and 3, Options 2c and 3c of Action 3 seems to duplicate efforts in Actions 5 and 6. If it is the Councils’ desire to delegate the setting and changing of bag limits for mutton snapper to the State of Florida as outlined in Action 3, then the Councils may wish to reconsider the establishment of bag limits for mutton snapper in the manner shown in Actions 5 and 6. It would seem to be contradictory to consider delegating the setting of bag limits to the State of Florida in one action, and then to rationalize appropriate bag limit modifications under a Council management strategy in another action.*

IPT Note: *The Councils should determine specifically which types of modifications to existing allowable gear will be permitted under this action.*

Action 4: Establish and Consolidate ABCs and ACLs for Mutton Snapper

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current commercial and recreational ACLs for mutton snapper based on the South Atlantic Councils Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and maintain the current total ACL for mutton snapper in the Gulf based on the Reef Fish Resources FMP.

Alternative 2: Manage mutton snapper as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional acceptable biological catch (ABC) and annual catch limit (ACL).

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for mutton snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 3a: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3b: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2009-2013

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2004-2013

Action 5. Modify Mutton Snapper Recreational Bag Limit in Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. Mutton snapper is part of the aggregate 10 snapper bag limit in the Gulf of Mexico, the South Atlantic, and the State of Florida.

Alternative 2: Remove mutton snapper from the recreational aggregate bag limit and change the recreational bag limit for mutton snapper during the regular season (July-April) and during the spawning season (May-June).

Option 2a: 10 fish/person/day in the regular season, 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season

Option 2b: 5 fish/person/day in the regular season, 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season

Option 2c: 4 fish/person/day in the regular season, 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season

Alternative 3: Retain mutton snapper within the aggregate 10 snapper bag limit in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic, but specify bag limits for mutton snapper within the snapper recreational aggregate bag limit during the regular season (July-April) and during the spawning season (May-June).

Option 3a: Within the aggregate snapper bag limit, no more than 10 fish/person/day in the regular season and no more than 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season may be mutton snapper.

Option 3b: Within the aggregate snapper bag limit, no more than 5 fish/person/day in the regular season and no more than 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season may be mutton snapper.

Option 3c: Within the aggregate snapper bag limit, no more than 4 fish/person/day in the regular season and no more than 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season may be mutton snapper.

Note: In the Gulf of Mexico, the 10 snapper-per-person aggregate includes all snapper species in the reef fish management unit except red snapper, vermilion snapper, and lane snapper (Table 5). In the South Atlantic, the 10 snapper-per-person aggregate includes all snapper species in the snapper grouper management unit except red snapper and vermilion snapper (Table 5). Cubera snapper less than 30" total length (TL) are included in the 10 fish bag limit. The aggregate 10 snapper bag limit includes a maximum of 2 cubera snapper per person (not to exceed 2 per/vessel) for fish 30" TL or larger off Florida.

Note: State of Florida has the same regulations for the recreational sector as both Councils; however, the commercial sector in state waters is managed using regulations identical to the South Atlantic Council's commercial regulations.

IPT Note: Establishing bag limits in Actions 5 and 6 seems to duplicate efforts in Alternatives 2 and 3, Options 2c and 3c of Action 3. If it is the Councils' desire to establish bag limits for

mutton snapper in the manner shown in Actions 5 and 6, then the Councils may wish to reconsider delegating the setting and changing of bag limits for mutton snapper to the State of Florida as outlined in Action 3. It would seem to be contradictory to consider delegating the setting of bag limits to the State of Florida in one action, and then to rationalize appropriate bag limit modifications under a Council management strategy in another action.

IPT Note: *The Councils may wish to revisit the inclusion of both Options 2b/c and 3b/c, since they differ by only one fish per person per day. If the Councils wish to include both options, then additional rationale will help frame subsequent analyses.*

Action 6. Modify Mutton Snapper Commercial Trip Limit in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. During May-June, the commercial sector in the South Atlantic is restricted to 10 mutton snapper per day or 10 mutton snapper per trip, whichever is more restrictive. There is no bag or trip limit for the commercial sector in the Gulf or South Atlantic from July through April.

Alternative 2: Establish a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper during the regular season (July through April) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Option 2a: 10 fish/person/day

Option 2b: Some higher bag or trip limit.

Alternative 3: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper during the spawning season (May and June) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Option 3a: 2 fish/person/day

Option 3b: 5 fish/person/day

Option 3c: 10 fish/person/day

Option 3d: No bag or trip limit

Alternative 4: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper that is identical to the recreational bag limit during the spawning season (May and June) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 5: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper for the handline sector during the spawning season (May and June) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Option 5a: 2 fish/person/day

Option 5b: 5 fish/person/day

Option 5c: 10 fish/person/day

Option 5d: Some other trip limit

Alternative 6: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper for the longline sector during the spawning season (May and June) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Option 6a: 500 pounds whole weight trip limit

Option 6b: Some other trip limit

Added by the South Atlantic Council

***IPT Note:** Establishing bag limits in Actions 5 and 6 seems to duplicate efforts in Alternatives 2 and 3, Options 2c and 3c of Action 3. If it is the Councils' desire to establish bag limits for mutton snapper in the manner shown in Actions 5 and 6, then the Councils may wish to reconsider delegating the setting and changing of bag limits for mutton snapper to the State of Florida as outlined in Action 3. It would seem to be contradictory to consider delegating the setting of bag limits to the State of Florida in one action, and then to rationalize appropriate bag limit modifications under a Council management strategy in another action.*

IPT Note: *The Councils may wish to consider vessel limits for commercial mutton snapper fishing. The biological effects of bag limits could vary depending on the number of crew aboard a commercial fishing vessel, making biological effects more difficult to determine. For example, the biological effects of four crew members retaining the per-person trip limit in Alternative 5 would be greater than the same for only two crew members. Analysis of Alternative 5 may prove difficult, since there is no way to know how many crew could be on board a commercial fishing vessel on any given day.*

The following actions pertain exclusively to black grouper.

Action 7: Partial Delegation of Recreational Management of Black Grouper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

Note: Under this action, the Councils will remain responsible for setting annual catch limits and determining appropriate accountability measures.

Alternative 1: No action. Retain recreational management of black grouper in the Reef Fish Resources and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for black grouper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

***IPT Note:** The IPT recommends determining upper and/or lower bounds for management items being considered for delegation to Florida (Options 2a-c). Also, further detail will be necessary to define “Minor modifications to existing allowable gear”, as analyses are not currently possible without knowing which modifications will be open to consideration by the Councils.*

***IPT Note:** Delegating the setting of bag limits under Alternative 2, Option 2c of Action 7 seems to duplicate efforts in Alternative 8 of Action 11. If it is the Councils’ desire to delegate the setting and changing of bag limits for black grouper to the State of Florida as outlined in Action 7, then the Councils may wish to reconsider the establishment of bag limits for black grouper in the manner shown in Action 11. It would seem to be contradictory to consider delegating the setting of bag limits to the State of Florida in one action, and then to rationalize appropriate bag limit modifications under a Council management strategy in another action.*

***IPT Note:** The Councils should determine specifically which types of modifications to existing allowable gear will be permitted under this action.*

Action 8: Establish and Consolidate ABCs and ACLs for Black Grouper

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current recreational ACLs based on the Reef Fish Resources and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Manage black grouper as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional acceptable biological catch (ABC) and annual catch limit (ACL).

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for black grouper and allocate the recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 3a: Combine the current recreational allocations (i.e., 63.12% of the ACL for the South Atlantic and 27% of the ACL for the Gulf) for black grouper into a single recreational allocation.

Option 3b: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3c: Base sector allocations on average landings from 2009-2013

Option 3d: Base sector allocations on average landings from 2004-2013

The following action pertains exclusively to accountability measures. Accountability measures are used by the Councils to compensate for overages in a given fishing year, to decrease the probability that deleterious impacts to fisheries will persist for long time periods.

Action 9: Specify Accountability Measures for South Florida Species

Note: Under some circumstances more than one alternative could be selected as preferred.

Alternative 1: No action. Maintain the current recreational and commercial accountability measures (AMs) for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, and black grouper based on the Reef Fish Resources and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

South Atlantic: Commercial AM – In-season closure when the ACL is expected to be met and ACL reduced in following fishing season if species is overfished and ACL is exceeded.
Recreational AM – if ACL is exceeded, monitor landings in following season for persistence in landings and reduce the length of the following fishing season, if necessary.

Gulf: For Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper, if the combined commercial and recreational landings exceed the stock ACL, in-season AMs are in effect for the following year. If the combined landings reach or are projected to reach the stock ACL, both sectors will be closed for the remainder of that fishing year. For black grouper, this AM applies to the ACL for the other shallow-water grouper aggregate (black grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, and yellowfin grouper).

Alternative 2: If the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceeds the stock ACL, then during the following fishing year, if the sum of commercial and recreational landings reaches or is projected to reach the stock ACL, then the commercial and recreational sectors will be closed for the remainder of that fishing year. On and after the effective date of a closure, all sales, purchases harvest or possession of this species in or from the EEZ will be prohibited.

Option 2a: For yellowtail snapper

Option 2b: For mutton snapper

Option 2c: For black grouper

Alternative 3: If commercial landings reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, **NMFS** would close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the EEZ would be limited to the recreational bag and possession limit. Additionally, if the commercial ACL is exceeded, **NMFS** would reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Option 3a: For yellowtail snapper

Option 3b: For mutton snapper

Option 3c: For black grouper

Alternative 4: If recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings. If necessary, NMFS would reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if NMFS determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Option 4a: For yellowtail snapper

Option 4b: For mutton snapper

Option 4c: For black grouper

Alternative 5: If recreational landings reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL, NMFS would close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year, unless, using the best scientific information available, NMFS determines that a closure is unnecessary.

Option 5a: If the species is overfished

Sub-option 5a(1): For yellowtail snapper

Sub-option 5a(2): For mutton snapper

Sub-option 5a(3): For black grouper

Option 5b: Regardless of stock status

Sub-option 5b(1): For yellowtail snapper

Sub-option 5b(2): For mutton snapper

Sub-option 5b(3): For black grouper

Alternative 6: The Councils would jointly set the ACL for the recreational and commercial sector. If the combined recreational ACL and commercial ACL is met or expected to be met, NMFS would close both sectors for the remainder of the fishing year.

Option 6a: yellowtail snapper

Option 6b: mutton snapper

Option 6c: black grouper

Modified by the South Atlantic Council to insert sub-options for each species under the two main options for the alternative

Note: The South Atlantic Council is considering changes to their accountability measures in Snapper-Grouper Amendment 34, which could change the no-action and action alternatives in Action 9. These changes have been transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce by the South Atlantic Council, and are currently in the NMFS review and rule-making process.

The South Atlantic Council would like for the language in Alternatives 3 and 4 to mirror similar language found in the South Atlantic Council's Generic Accountability Measures Amendment. The language proposed herein has been provided by the Southeast Regional Office to be more similar to language NMFS is using or recommending in multiple other documents.

The following actions pertain to seasonal closures in the shallow-water grouper fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic. Seasonal closures are time-based closures to fishing effort to conserve or protect fish stocks from harvest during periods of increased vulnerability, such as during spawning seasons.

Action 10. Modify Shallow-water Grouper Species Compositions and Seasonal Closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. Retain the existing respective shallow-water grouper species compositions and seasonal closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils.

Alternative 2: Remove the shallow-water grouper closure for all affected grouper species in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic:

Option 2a: from the Dade/Monroe County line on the east coast of Florida to Shark Point on the west coast of Monroe County, Florida.

Option 2b: Throughout each Council's jurisdiction.

Alternative 3: Establish identical regulations for shallow-water grouper species compositions for the Gulf and South Atlantic from the Dade/Monroe County line on the east coast of Florida to Shark Point on the west coast of Monroe County, Florida:

Option 3a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper species composition for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 3b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper species composition for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 3c: Specify a new and identical shallow-water species complex for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Alternative 4: Establish identical regulations for the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic from the Dade/Monroe County line on the east coast of Florida to Shark Point on the west coast of Monroe County, Florida:

Option 4a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4c: Establish new and identical regulations for shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 5: Establish identical regulations for the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures throughout the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 5a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 5b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 5c: Establish new and identical regulations for shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 6: Modify the shallow-water grouper seasonal closure off Monroe County, Florida to allow harvest of other shallow-water grouper species and only close harvest of gag.

Action 11. Modify Black Grouper Fishery Closures and Bag Limits in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 1: No Action – Do not modify black grouper recreational closures in the Gulf of Mexico or recreational and commercial closures in the South Atlantic. Maintain currently established seasonal bag limits in both the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic, with black grouper included as a component of the shallow-water grouper and reef fish aggregate bag limits.

Alternative 2: Remove black grouper from the shallow-water grouper closures of the recreational season in the Gulf and of the recreational and commercial seasons in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 3: Establish a recreational seasonal closure for black grouper. (*Multiple options may be chosen*)

Option 3a: January

Option 3b: February

Option 3c: March

Alternative 4: Remove black grouper from the shallow-water grouper closures of the recreational season in the Gulf of Mexico and the recreational and commercial seasons in the South Atlantic in federal waters off Florida.

Alternative 5: Remove black grouper from the shallow-water grouper closures of the recreational season in the Gulf of Mexico and the recreational and commercial seasons in the South Atlantic in federal waters off Monroe County, Florida.

Alternative 6: Remove black grouper from recreational aggregate bag limits in the Gulf of Mexico.

Alternative 7: Remove black grouper from recreational aggregate bag limits in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 8: Establish a recreational bag limit for black grouper.

Option 8a: One fish/person/day

Option 8b: Two fish/person/day

Option 8c: Three fish/person/day

Option 8d: Four fish/person/day

Option 8e: Apply this bag limit only to the following area(s):

Sub-option 8a: Off Monroe County

Sub-option 8b: In federal waters off Florida

Sub-option 8c: In federal waters of the Gulf and the South Atlantic

Alternative 9: Modify the commercial seasonal closure for black grouper in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Option 3a: January

Option 3b: February

Option 3c: March

Added by the South Atlantic Council

***IPT Note:** Establishing bag limits under Alternative 8 of Action 11 seems to duplicate efforts in Alternative 2, Option 2c of Action 7. If it is the Councils' desire to establish bag limits for black grouper in the manner shown in Action 11, then the Councils may wish to reconsider delegating the setting and changing of bag limits for black grouper to the State of Florida as outlined in Action 7.*

The South Atlantic Council wants to include discussion and a new alternative considering changes to commercial black grouper management, including seasonal closures and trip limits. These changes would affect the Gulf shallow-water grouper IFQ program.

The following actions pertain to modifications of landing and effort controls. Such regulations include size limits, bag limits, and permissible gear types. By modifying how these regulations influence fishing practices, the Councils can control the size and quantity of fish landed, and help to influence other factors including discard mortality.

Action 12: Harmonize bag and size limits for species in shallow-water grouper complex seasonal closures in Federal Waters Adjacent to Monroe County, Florida.

Alternative 1: No action – Retain the current bag and size limits for species in shallow-water grouper complex seasonal closures in federal waters adjacent to Monroe County, Florida.

Alternative 2: Harmonize the bag limits for species included in the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 3: Harmonize the size limits for species included in the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Added by the South Atlantic Council

IPT Note: *The IPT recommends the removal of Action 12, as it is outside of the scope of this amendment. Action 12 would require the addition (in the Gulf) or removal (in the South Atlantic) of species in the respective shallow-water grouper complexes (Action 10). Also, Action 12 would have implications for the Gulf and South Atlantic regions to a much greater extent than that outlined in the purpose of this amendment. Further, Alternative 3 of Action 10 already achieves the goal of Action 12, with respect to the South Florida region. If Action 12 remains necessary, it may be worthwhile to consider a separate amendment for this action, as it will encompass several additional species with multiple actions for each species.*

Action 13. Changes to Circle Hook Requirement in Gulf and South Atlantic Jurisdictional Waters

Alternative 1: No action – Retain the current hook requirements in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 2: Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for yellowtail snapper in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Option 2a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 2b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 3: Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for yellowtail snapper south of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Option 3a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 3b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 4: Require the use of circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for all snapper-grouper species south of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the South Atlantic.

Option 4a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 4b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 5. Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for all species in the snapper grouper complex north of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the South Atlantic.

Option 5a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 5b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 6. Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for yellowtail snapper in federal waters from the Dade/Monroe County line on the east coast of Florida to Shark Point on the west coast of Monroe County, Florida

Option 6a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 6b: For the commercial fishing sector

IPT Note: *The IPT recommends the removal of Alternative 5, as it is outside of the scope of this amendment. The area being referenced in Alternative 5 includes areas north of the State of Florida.*

The South Atlantic Council would like to retain Alternative 5, as it would allow them to address other aspects of Snapper-Grouper management in one document.

IPT Note: *The Committee may wish to consider establishing safeguards to ensure that a vessel fishing for yellowtail snapper with hooks other than circle hooks is not also actively fishing for other reef fish species for which circle hooks are still required.*

APPENDIX A. CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

Action 1: Modifications to the Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils

Alternative 1: No action. Do not modify the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Delegate management of any of the species listed below to the State of Florida.

Option 2a: yellowtail snapper

Option 2b: mutton snapper

Option 2c: black grouper recreational fishery only

Note: Alternative 2 would delegate all management including ABC, ACLs, management measures, etc.

Alternative 3: Manage each stock as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional annual catch limits (ACLs).

Suggested wording from FWC Staff from minutes pages 125-127: The Gulf and South Atlantic Councils will agree to manage any of the species listed below with an overall ABC and an overall ACL. Each Council would agree to a recreational and commercial split. Both Councils will close their jurisdictions when the overall ACL is met.

Option 3a: yellowtail snapper

Option 3b: mutton snapper

Option 3c: black grouper

Alternative 4: Remove any of the species listed below from the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Option 4a: yellowtail snapper

Option 4b: mutton snapper

Option 4c: black grouper

Alternative 5: Remove any of the species listed below from the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan of the Gulf Council and request the Secretary of Commerce designate the South Atlantic Council as the responsible Council.

Option 5a: yellowtail snapper

Option 5b: mutton snapper

Alternative 6: Remove any of the species listed below from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan of the South Atlantic Council and request the Secretary of Commerce designate the Gulf Council as the responsible Council.

Option 6a: yellowtail snapper

Option 6b: mutton snapper

Rationale: Action 1 was removed by the Committee, and the alternatives therein were merged within other remaining Actions in the document.

Action 3: Allocate Yellowtail Snapper Sector Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Landings Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 2. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for yellowtail snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for yellowtail snapper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 75% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 25% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3b: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3d: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Option 3e: Employ some other allocation formula

Alternative 4. Create a landings allowance for yellowtail snapper in the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Rationale: Alternative 2a was removed after a mathematical bias was identified with the proposed "bowtie" approach. Alternative 3 was removed in favor of Alternative 2, and because changes in the current jurisdictional split would require revisiting sector allocations in the future. Alternative 4 was removed because it was not deemed necessary to accomplish stated management goals.

Action 4: Delegate Commercial and Recreational Management of Mutton Snapper to the State of Florida

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Mutton Snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 2e: Fishing year

Alternative 3: Determine specific commercial management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Mutton Snapper:

Option 3a: Size limits

Option 3b: Seasons

Option 3c: Commercial trip limits

Option 3d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 3e: Fishing year

Rationale: Alternatives 2e and 3e were removed after the Committee determined that setting the fishing year should remain a Council responsibility, in conjunction with determining ABCs, ACLs, and AMs.

Action 5: Allocate Mutton Snapper Sector Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Bycatch Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 2. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for mutton snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for mutton snapper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 82% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 18% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3b: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3d: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Option 3e: Employ some other allocation formula

Alternative 4. Create a landings allowance for mutton snapper in the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Rationale: Alternative 2a was removed after a mathematical bias was identified with the proposed “bowtie” approach. Alternative 3 was removed in favor of Alternative 2, and because changes in the current jurisdictional split would require revisiting sector allocations in the future. Alternative 4 was removed because it was not deemed necessary to accomplish stated management goals.

Action 8: Delegate Recreational Management of Black Grouper to the State of Florida

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for black grouper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 2e: Fishing year

Rationale: Alternative 2e was removed after the Committee determined that setting the fishing year should remain a Council responsibility, in conjunction with determining ABCs, ACLs, and AMs.

Action 9: Allocate Black Grouper Recreational Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Recreational Bycatch Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 2. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for black grouper and allocate the recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2b: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (Bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the

weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1991-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Alternative 3. Use both Councils' agreed upon ABC for black grouper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 47% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 53% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1991-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3b: Use the following sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1993-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2009-2013.

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3d: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Option 3e: Employ some other allocation formula

Alternative 4. Create a recreational landings allowance for black grouper in the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4c: Adjust ABC by 3% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4d: Adjust ABC by 4% to address landings in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Rationale: Alternative 2b was removed after a mathematical bias was identified with the proposed "bowtie" approach. Alternative 3 was removed in favor of Alternative 2, and because changes in the current jurisdictional split would require revisiting sector allocations in the future. Alternative 4 was removed because it was not deemed necessary to accomplish stated management goals.

Action 10: Specify Accountability Measures for South Florida Species

Alternative 3: If commercial landings as estimated by the Science and Research Director reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limit. Additionally,

Option 3a: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species is overfished.

Option 3b: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Option 3c: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Alternative 4: If recreational landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings.

Option 4a: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the species is overfished. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Option 4b: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Option 4c: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Rationale: Alternatives 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b were removed after a recommendation from the South Atlantic Council, which recently passed updated accountability measures in Snapper Grouper Amendment 34. Amendment 34 is currently undergoing regulatory review.

Action 13. Changes to Circle Hook Requirement in Gulf and South Atlantic Jurisdictional Waters

Alternative 3: Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for all reef fish south of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Option 3a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 3b: For the commercial fishing sector

Rationale: Alternative 3 was because of the documented positive biological effects identified for red snapper, which have shown decreased hooking mortality when caught with circle hooks. Because red snapper are undergoing rebuilding in the Gulf, the Committee elected to remove this alternative, so as to not jeopardize the rebuilding timeline for red snapper by potentially introducing additional discard mortality.