

**Reef Fish Committee
Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab B**

Agenda Item IV: Review of Reef Fish and IFQ Program Landings

Action: Information only

Council input and next steps: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will review the status of reef fish and individual fishing quota (IFQ) program landings relative to catch limits, which is provided for the Committee's information only. In addition, SERO staff will note the charter for-hire component's red snapper season projection for the 2022 fishing season. These data are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee.

Agenda Item V: Review of Red Snapper Private Recreational Component 2021 Landings Summary and 2022 Season Projections

Action: Information only

Council input and next steps: Council representatives from the five Gulf States will review their 2021 private angling seasons for red snapper and offer projections for the 2022 fishing season. These data are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee.

Agenda Item VI: Draft Options: Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack Catch Limits, Sector Allocations, and other Rebuilding Plan Modifications

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council Staff will review management options considered in Draft Amendment 54 to the Reef Fish fishery management plan, which considers modifications to catch limits and sector allocations in response to the results of the most recent stock assessment. The SEDAR 70 stock assessment for greater amberjack determined that the stock was overfished and experiencing overfishing as of the end of the 2018 fishing year, and that reductions in harvest would be necessary to immediately end overfishing and rebuild the stock by 2027 as required by the current rebuilding plan. The SEDAR 70 assessment incorporated new data, including recreational catch and effort data calibrated to the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES). These options follow the SSC's recommendations for updated catch advice. The Committee should review the information presented, provide feedback to staff on the range of options, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Review of Revised Great Red Snapper Count Estimates and SSC Recommendations for Red Snapper Catch Advice

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Dr. Jim Nance (SSC Chair) will summarize the SSC's deliberations about the revised data considered for generating updated catch advice for red snapper. At its March 2022 meeting, the SSC reviewed the study design, response to peer-review comments, and updated estimate of absolute abundance for Louisiana by LGL Ecological Associates, Inc. This estimate was ultimately used to supplant partially imputed data for that state from the estimate derived from the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC). Further, the data for the shallowest depth stratum for Florida from the GRSC-derived estimate were further stratified to reconcile differences between the GRSC and other historical fishery-independent surveys. Dr. Nance will review the SSC's deliberations and its resulting overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations. The Committee should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

The Committee may also recommend that staff begin work on a framework action to the Reef Fish FMP to revise red snapper catch limits. The Council transmitted a previous framework action to revise red snapper catch limits on June 22, 2021; this framework action has not yet been implemented.

Agenda Item VIII: Presentation and Discussion of Gulf of Mexico Gag Grouper Interim Rule, SRFS Calibration, and Interim Analysis

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Mr. Andy Strelcheck (SERO) will review a presentation about the proposed interim rule to end overfishing of Gulf gag grouper. The SEDAR 72 assessment was presented at the SSC's September 2021 meeting, and used updated recreational catch and effort data from MRIP-FES, and an ecosystem-informed model for incorporating episodic mortality from red tide. During its November 2021 meeting, the SSC determined that gag grouper is overfished and undergoing overfishing, and recommended revising the proxy for determining fishing mortality at maximum sustainable yield. Based on that recommendation, the SSC also determined corresponding overfishing and acceptable biological catch yield stream projections for gag grouper. At its January 2022 meeting, the Council's Reef Fish Advisory Panel (RFAP) recommended the longest rebuilding timeline possible for the stock. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Dr. Clay Porch (Southeast Fisheries Science Center [SEFSC]) will also discuss the progress and timeline for calibration of the State of Florida's State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS) to MRIP-FES, for the purpose of using the SRFS index to inform an alternative model run for the SEDAR 72

stock assessment. This SRFS model run will inform landings for the private angling component only. Dr. Porch will also inform the Committee about the feasibility of conducting an interim analysis for gag grouper, including candidate representative indices of relative abundance that may be suitable to inform the SSC and Council about the current condition of the stock. The Committee should ask questions about these topics as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Commercial IFQ Programs

Action: Information

Council input and next steps: Staff will provide updated information concerning the process and timeline for convening the IFQ Focus Group. The Committee should ask questions and provide feedback as appropriate. The Council anticipates announcing the members selected for the IFQ Focus Group during full Council committee reports on Thursday.

Agenda Item X: Review of Gulf Red Grouper Interim Analysis Health Status and SSC Recommendations

Action: Presentation and discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Dr. Nance will briefly review the recent red grouper interim analysis performed by the SEFSC and presented to the SSC in March 2022. This interim analysis was offered as a health check, since the previous interim analysis was used to modify catch limits for red grouper; this framework action was transmitted to NMFS for implementation on December 14, 2021. The Committee should review the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item XI: Other Business

Action: Additional items that can be brought up for discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by Committee members during the adoption of the agenda, time permitting. If the Committee wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future Council meeting.
