



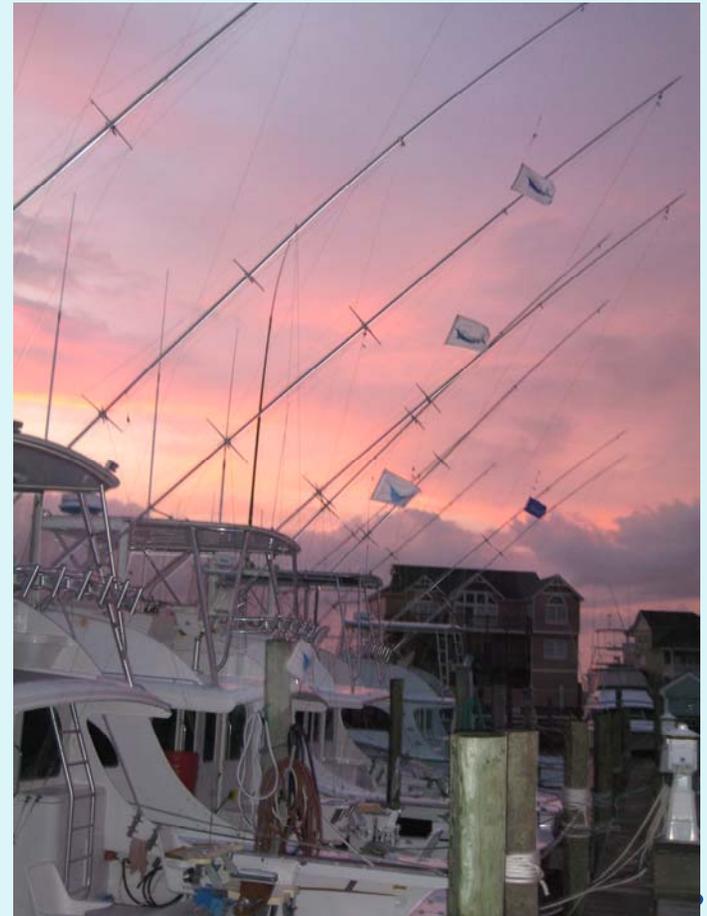
Tab B, No. 8

# Reef Fish AP Recommendations: Red Snapper For-Hire Buffer and Fishing Seasons

June 2024  
Reef Fish Committee

# Background

- April 2024 Council Motions:
  - *Explore reducing the buffer between the ACT and ACL for the for-hire component for red snapper*
  - *Explore modifying the fishing season for the for-hire component for red snapper*



# Reef Fish AP Discussions

- **Fishing Season:**
  - RFAP interested in changes to fishing season
  - Regional approach would be problematic
    - Changing overlap of fishing seasons might affect effort
  - For-hire fishing in the Western Gulf starts in June; year-round in eastern Gulf
  - Could be disenfranchisement of private anglers by the for-hire component having earlier access



# Reef Fish AP Discussions

- **Fishing Season:**
- **Unanimous RFAP Motions:**
  - *Recommends the Council explore opening the charter for-hire fishing season for red snapper on the Friday before Memorial Day.*
  - *Recommends exploring setting the charter for-hire red snapper season based on a fixed closure, to allow for the possibility of a second season opening in the fall.*



# Reef Fish AP Discussions

- **Buffer:**
  - RFAP was generally supportive of reducing the buffer
- **Unanimous RFAP Motion:**
  - *Recommends that the Council explore the removal of, or significantly reduce, the buffer for red snapper for the charter for-hire fishery.*



# Considerations

- **Fishing Season:**

- No for-hire effort estimates before June 1
- Only data from 2021 for effort estimates beyond August

- **Buffer:**

- SERO season projections regularly constrained catch at/below the ACT
- Season set to for-hire ACT, no overages of ACL



# Considerations

- Buffer may be useful for considering change in fishing season
  - Buffer may help managers understand changes in fishing behavior if fishing season changes
  - Buffer may insulate for-hire fleet from unpredicted overage of its ACL
- Changing buffer and fishing season will likely increase the chance of exceeding the for-hire ACL



# Draft Action: Fishing Season

- **Alternative 1:** No Action. The for-hire red snapper fishing season will open on June 1 and will close when the for-hire ACT is projected to be met.
- **Alternative 2:** Modify the for-hire red snapper fishing season to open on the Friday before Memorial Day. Close the for-hire fishing season when the for-hire ACT is projected to be met.



# Draft Action: Fishing Season

- **Alternative 3:** Modify the for-hire red snapper fishing season to be comprised of two split seasons. The first (summer) season will open on the Friday before Memorial Day and will close when **X%** of the for-hire ACT is projected to be met. The second (fall) season will open on November 1 and will close when 100% of the for-hire ACT is projected to be met.
  - **Option 3a:** 70% of the for-hire ACT
  - **Option 3b:** 80% of the for-hire ACT
  - **Option 3c:** 90% of the for-hire ACT



# Draft Action: Fishing Season

- **Alternative 4:** Modify the for-hire fishing season to be comprised of two split seasons. The first (summer) season will open on the Friday before Memorial Day and will close on July 31. The second (fall) season will open on November 1 and will close when the for-hire ACT is projected to be met.

Year	Season Open	Season Close	Season Reopen	Season Close 2	Total # Days
2020	June 1	August 2	-	-	62
2021	June 1	August 3	October 15	November 6	86
2022	June 1	August 19	-	-	79
2023	June 1	August 25	-	-	84



# Draft Action: Fishing Season

- All fishing season options would be based on landings data from prior fishing years
  - Would **not** use in-season monitoring
- How to address lack of data before June 1 or after August?
  - Could use effort from the first week of June from some set time period to estimate new May effort
    - E.g., first week of June from 2020 – 2023
  - Could use effort from fall 2021 reopening to estimate new November effort



# Draft Action: Buffer

- **Alternative 1:** No action. Maintain the current 9% buffer between the for-hire component ACT and ACL for red snapper.
- **Alternative 2:** Modify the buffer between the for-hire component ACT and ACL for red snapper using the ACL/ACT Control Rule, using landings data from 2020 – 2023. The buffer will be 5%.
- **Alternative 3:** Remove the buffer between the for-hire component ACT and ACL for red snapper.



# Draft Action: Buffer

Fishing Year	Landings	ACL	% Landed	PSE (%)
2020	2,408,134	3,130,000	77%	11
2021	2,853,410	3,130,000	91%	14.4
2022	2,836,877	3,130,000	91%	13.5
2023	2,989,919	3,380,574	88%	9.8

Source: Landings from SERO ACL Monitoring Database 5/30/2024; PSEs from NOAA OST 5/30/2024



# Questions?

