



South Atlantic Council Issues

Review and Discussion

Report date: December 21, 2007

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Marine Fisheries Management

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met in North Carolina from December 2-7, 2007. A number of important actions to restrict harvest of snapper and grouper species are being developed or are in the process of final approval. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for March 3-7, 2008.

Staff has provided a more detailed briefing document on federal issues to the Commission available at the Commission Meeting website. This presentation focuses on major pending actions addressing reef fish management in federal waters of the South Atlantic.

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Snowy Grouper

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



Rebuilding Targets Approved

- Optimum fishing level
- Minimum population size
- Schedules for rebuilding depleted stocks

Allocation Alternatives (Currently no allocation)

- 95% commercial and 5% recreational
- Total Allowable Catch: 102,960 lbs
- Council to take final action in March 2008



→ Staff recommends supporting this Alternative

Snowy Grouper—The Council has approved regulatory amendments that establish rebuilding plans and management benchmarks for snowy grouper in the South Atlantic. The rebuilding plans establish management targets for the optimum fishing level, minimum population size, and schedules for rebuilding depleted stocks. These amendments have been forwarded on to the United States Department of Commerce for formal review and approval. The final step would be development of federal regulations.

Additional measures are under development and establish harvest allocations for snowy grouper. At the December meeting the Council selected as its preferred alternative an allocation of 95% commercial to 5% recreational harvest for managing an established total allowable catch of 102,960 pounds. The allocation is considered interim and is based on historical landings from 1986 to 2005.

Staff Recommendation: *The Council is scheduled to take final action on the snowy grouper allocation at its March 2008 meeting and staff recommends supporting this alternative.*

Red Porgy

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



Rebuilding Targets Approved

Allocation Alternatives (Currently no allocation)

Use a 50:50 allocation (Council Preferred Alternative)

- Interim allocation based on recommendation of Council's Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel
- Council to take final action in March 2008

→ Staff recommends Supporting this Alternative



Red Porgy—The Council has approved regulatory amendments that establish rebuilding plans and management benchmarks for red porgy in the South Atlantic. These amendments have been forwarded on to the U.S. Department of Commerce for formal review and approval. The final step would be development of federal regulations.

Additional measures are under development and establish harvest allocations for red porgy. At the December meeting the council selected as its preferred alternative a 50:50 allocation between commercial and recreational fishers. The allocation is considered interim and is based on a recommendation of the Council's Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel.

Staff Recommendation: The Council is scheduled to take final action on the red porgy allocation at its March 2008 meeting and staff recommends supporting this alternative.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Other Issues Under Way



Other Actions for Snapper-Grouper

- Update management reference points for golden tilefish
- Prohibit recreational sale
- Bycatch monitoring
- Protect sea turtles and sawfish
- Liberalize commercial permit transfers

→ Council to take final action in March 2008



Other Issues Under Way – There are several federal issues being addressed by the Council that may have some bearing on the FWC and Florida fishers. The issues include: 1) updating the management reference points for golden tilefish, 2) prohibiting the sale of all recreationally-caught snapper-grouper, 3) establishing interim bycatch monitoring measures, 4) protecting sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish that interact with the snapper-grouper fishery, and; 5) liberalizing commercial permit transfers. These issues will be taken up for final action at the Council's March 2008 meeting.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Other Issues Under Way cont'd



- **Snapper-grouper**
 - Begin work on annual catch limits and accountability measures
- **Continued work on Fishery Ecosystem Plan**
 - Establishes deepwater coral protection zones
- **Develop a process for determining allocations**



Other Issues Under Way cont'd – The Council also continues to work on other items of interest to Florida. For snapper-grouper management, work has begun on annual catch limits and accountability measures. They also are continuing their work on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan which would establish deepwater coral protection zones. Also, development of a process for determining allocation between the commercial and recreational fisheries is underway and ongoing.

Snowy Grouper & Red Porgy

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



QUESTIONS?

