

# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

## Update and Liaison Report



Spring 2022

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met in Jekyll Island, Georgia, March 7-11, 2022.

Below is a summary of the Council's actions:

### **Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Amendment**

Staff presented the most recent actions and alternatives language drafted by the IPT concerning the acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule (with focus on the stock risk rating), carry-overs, and revisions to framework procedures. The SSC Chair provided SSC recommendations. The Council provided direction to staff for further development of the amendment. The draft amendment will be reviewed and considered for public hearings at the June 2022 Council meeting.

### **Allocations Decision Tool**

The tool involves a decision tree approach and online tool to assist the Council in incorporating multiple types of information into sector allocation decisions. The Council reviewed the approach at a special meeting on February 7, 2022 and discussed an example of how to apply the approach to greater amberjack. At the March meeting the Council further discussed the approach, potential changes, and how to use the tool moving forward. The Council directed staff to develop an additional online tool to collect public input on topics relevant to allocations and long-term trends in the fisheries and to update Fishery Performance Report discussion questions to gather more input on social and economic factors. The decision tree approach and online tool will be applied to Spanish mackerel for review by the Council at the December 2022 meeting.

### **Commercial Electronic Logbook Amendment**

The Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment that would authorize NMFS to implement electronic reporting for commercial fisheries managed by the South Atlantic Council. The Council will review an options paper at the June 2022 meeting.

## **SEDAR Items**

The Council approved the terms of reference for the Yellowtail Snapper Interim Analysis.

### **Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 2**

This amendment includes measures to extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit, establish separate recreational retention limits onboard for-hire and private vessels, and remove or reduce captain and crew bag limits for dolphin. The Council approved the amendment for public scoping and will review the amendment at the June 2022 meeting.

### **Atlantic King Mackerel (CMP Amendment 34)**

This amendment includes measures to update catch levels for Atlantic king mackerel based on the most recent assessment and modify recreational management measures, including increasing the bag limit in federal waters off Florida and modifying the requirement to land fish with heads and fins intact. The Council reviewed draft rationale and approved the following definition: damaged fish refers to king or Spanish mackerel that are damaged only through natural predation. The Council approved the amendment for formal review.

### **Snapper Grouper Amendments**

#### *Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper Catch Levels*

In December 2021, the Council directed staff to investigate management measures that could reduce mortality of released snapper grouper species and the frequency of encounters with fish that cannot be kept. By implementing a measure to reduce such encounters, the Council also intends to reduce discards of red snapper, possibly resulting in revision of the SSC's recommended ABC for red snapper. Staff presented an overview of the magnitude of the discard problem in the snapper grouper fishery and a summary of benefits and challenges of management measures considered thus far. The Council formally initiated Regulatory Amendment 35 to reduce snapper grouper releases, initially developing options based on time, area, and depth restrictions, and to implement catch levels for red snapper based on the most recent SSC recommendation. Staff will gather available information and present it to the Council in June 2022. The Council will then provide additional direction for development of management alternatives.

#### *Recreational Reporting/Permitting Amendment (Amendment 46)*

The Council received recommendations from the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup, which met five times in 2021 and 2022, and discussed resuming development of Amendment 46 to establish a permit and reporting requirements for the private recreational snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic region. An Ad Hoc Advisory Panel will be appointed in June 2022 and the Council will resume discussion of the amendment at their September 2022 meeting.

#### *Wreckfish ITQ Modernization (Amendment 48)*

This amendment addresses recommendations from the 2019 review of the Wreckfish ITQ Program and revises the objectives for the Snapper Grouper FMP. The amendment is expected to take some time to develop due to the nature of some of the actions under considerations (e.g., moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program). Staff reviewed a decision document with updated actions and alternatives for consideration. The Council approved the range of actions which address sector allocations, electronic reporting, the

wreckfish permit, season and spawning closures, vessel monitoring requirements, offloading sites and times, and cost recovery.

*Snowy Grouper (Amendment 51)*

The amendment adjusts catch levels based on the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 36 Update). Snowy grouper are overfished and undergoing overfishing. A rebuilding plan is currently in place and is not being modified. The Council removed consideration of a spawning season closure for the commercial sector and requested additional input from the Snapper Grouper AP on commercial trip limit modifications and consideration of regional management. The Council also picked preferred alternatives to facilitate analysis for the ACL/ABC, allocations, and commercial trip limit actions. Additionally, a Citizen Science project is being explored to obtain additional data on snowy grouper. The Council is expected to approve the amendment for public hearings in June 2022.

*Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (Amendment 52)*

The amendment increases catch levels for golden tilefish based on the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 66), revises sector allocations, and considers changes to commercial management measures (fishing year and trip limits) and recreational post-season accountability measures. The Council directed staff to convene a meeting of the golden tilefish commercial longline endorsement holders to discuss way to improve management of that gear sector. There are 23 vessels in the South Atlantic that hold such endorsements. The amendment also includes actions to modify recreational management measures for blueline tilefish (reduce the bag limit, prohibit retention by captain and crew on for-hire vessels, and modify the recreational season) and revise the post-season recreational accountability measure. The Council is expected to approve the amendment for public hearings in June 2022.

*Gag (Amendment 53)*

The amendment responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 71). Gag are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The amendment would establish a 10-year rebuilding plan, adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing. During the March meeting the Council reviewed a novel allocation method, removed options to modify the minimum size limit for both sectors, and modified the range of options for the recreational vessel limit. In addition, the Council removed consideration of restrictions to spearfishing gear and picked preferred actions to facilitate analysis for the rebuilding plan and ACL/ABC Actions. The Council is expected to approve the amendment for public hearings in June 2022.

*Greater Amberjack (Amendment 49)*

The amendment adjusts catch levels in response to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 59). Greater amberjack are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The Council indicated their preference to retain the current recreational minimum size limit and explore additional sector allocation alternatives. In addition, the Council requested AP input on the commercial minimum size limit, commercial seasonal trip limits, and April spawning closure. The Council approved the draft amendment for public hearings, which will be conducted during the public comment session at the June 2022 Council meeting.

**New England Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda**  
**Tuesday - Thursday, April 12-14, 2022**  
**Hilton Hotel, 20 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355**  
tel: (860) 572-0731 | [Hilton Mystic](#)  
[Webinar Registration Option](#)

Sending comments? Written comments must be received at the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) office no later than 8:00 a.m., Thursday, April 7, 2022 to be considered at this meeting. Please address comments to Council Chair Eric Reid or Executive Director Tom Nies at: NEFMC, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Email submissions should be sent to [comments@nefmc.org](mailto:comments@nefmc.org).

**IMPORTANT:** *The Council will hold its April 2022 meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Mystic, CT. This will be a hybrid meeting with in-person participation coupled with a webinar option for individuals who cannot or prefer not to attend in person. The Council continues to follow all public safety measures related to [COVID-19](#) and intends to do so for this meeting. The Council is encouraging all in-person participants to wear masks in the meeting room except when seated. Additional spacing between seats will be provided to allow for social distancing. Please participate remotely if you are experiencing COVID symptoms or do not feel well. Updates will be posted on the Council's [April 2022 meeting webpage](#).*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** *The Council's "Guidelines for Providing Public Comments" can be found [here](#). Anyone interested in speaking during the open period for public comment on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. should fill out the sign-up sheet on the table at the entrance to the Council meeting room. To speak remotely, email Janice Plante at [jplante@nefmc.org](mailto:jplante@nefmc.org) to get on the list.*

**Tuesday, April 12, 2022**

- 1:00 p.m. Announcements and Council Introductions** (Chair Eric Reid)  
Brief announcements and short introductions by individual Council members and staff
- 1:15 Reports on Recent Activities**  
Council Chair, Council Executive Director, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) Regional Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) General Counsel, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA Enforcement, ICCAT Advisory Committee/Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel
- 2:45 Monkfish Committee Report** (Libby Etrie)  
Framework 13: initiate action for 2023-2025 fishery specifications and other measures
- 3:45 Habitat Committee Report** (Council Chair Eric Reid)  
(1) Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs): final action on framework to designate a new HAPC in Southern New England; (2) Offshore Energy, Aquaculture, Cables, and Habitat-Related Work: update; (3) Coast Guard Approaches to Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts Port Access Route Study: approve Council comment letter; (4) NOAA Fisheries/BOEM Draft Federal Survey Mitigation Implementation Strategy: review and comment on the strategy, which describes the approach the agencies will use for mitigating the impacts of wind energy development on NOAA Fisheries surveys

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

- 9:00 a.m. Scallop Committee Report** (Melanie Griffin)  
Scallop Survey Working Group: update; Evaluation of Rotational Management Program: update on next steps; Limited Access Leasing: potential approval of scoping document
- 10:30 Sea Turtle Bycatch in Trawl Fisheries** (Carrie Upite, GARFO)  
GARFO recap of NOAA Fisheries action to develop bycatch reduction measures to reduce takes of sea turtles in trawl fisheries; Council comments
- 11:15 Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel** (Dr. Mike Sissenwine)  
Report on results of March 2022 meeting

- 11:30 Research Track Assessments** (Dr. Russ Brown, NEFSC)  
Presentation on peer review results for research track assessments for: (1) Gulf of Maine haddock; and (2) *Illex* squid and butterfish
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Break**
- 1:45 Maximized Retention Electronic Monitoring** (Jonathan Labaree, Liz Moore, GMRI)  
Presentation on the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's (GMRI) Maximized Retention Electronic Monitoring Program for Groundfish Monitoring Amendment 23
- 2:45 Groundfish Committee Report** (Rick Bellavance)  
Framework 65: initiate action to include (1) 2023 total allowable catches (TACs) for U.S./Canada shared resources on Georges Bank; (2) 2023-2024 specifications for GB cod and GB yellowtail flounder; (3) 2023-2025 specifications for 14 additional groundfish stocks; (4) revised rebuilding plans for Gulf of Maine cod and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic winter flounder; (6) additional measures to promote stock rebuilding; and (7) acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule revisions; Potential Changes to Groundfish Priorities: discuss committee recommendations for how to address changes to cod management units

**Thursday, April 14, 2022**

- 9:00 a.m. Atlantic Mackerel** (Jason Didden, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council staff)  
Presentation on Mid-Atlantic Council alternatives to rebuild Atlantic mackerel; Council comments
- 9:30 Open Period for Public Comment**  
Opportunity for the public to provide brief comments on issues relevant to Council business but not listed on this agenda (please limit remarks to 3-5 minutes)
- 9:45 State of the Ecosystem 2022** (Dr. Sean Lucey, NEFSC)  
Presentation on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's State of the Ecosystem 2022 New England report
- 10:45 Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)** (SSC Chair Dr. Lisa Kerr)  
Receive SSC's recommendations on the State of the Ecosystem 2022 report; Council discussion
- 11:15 Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM) Committee** (John Pappalardo)  
EBFM Public Information Workshops: update on workshop outreach and planning, introduction to workshop facilitator; Prototype Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE): committee recommendations on a plan to conduct a Prototype MSE for EBFM and the Georges Bank example Fishery Ecosystem Plan (eFEP)
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch Break**
- 1:30 Atlantic Herring** (GARFO staff)  
Update on status of the Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) Program for the Atlantic herring fishery; Council discussion
- 2:15 Other Business**

*Times listed next to the agenda items are estimates and are subject to change.*

*This meeting is being held in person and by webinar. Council member financial disclosure forms are available for examination on the Council website.*

Although other non-emergency issues not contained on this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

**Documents pertaining to Council actions are available for review prior to a final vote by the Council.**

**Please check the Council's website, [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org), or call (978) 465-0492 for copies.**

**This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 USC 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.**