

**Reef Fish Management Committee Report
June 9th - 10th, 2015
Joint GMFMC/SAFMC June 11th, 2015
Johnny Greene-V. Chair**

Options Paper – Joint South Florida Management – this item was covered in **Tab 4D** at the Gulf and South Atlantic Joint Session

SSC Review of Alternative Red Snapper MSY Proxies

Dr. Luis Barbieri presented the SSC's review of analysis of alternative SPR proxies for red snapper. The SSC concluded that there is insufficient biological evidence for a better MSY proxy than what is currently used by the Council (the yield corresponding to 26% SPR) for Gulf red snapper. In response to a question from a Committee member, Dr. Barbieri stated that he does not know of any way to quantify the risk associated with different SPR proxies. In response to another question as to whether there was biological evidence that the updated MSY-link estimate of 23% SPR was either better or worse than the earlier estimate of 26% SPR, Dr. Barbieri stated that the preferred SPR was 30% based on other species with similar life history characteristics, but the SSC felt that 26% was close to 30%, and therefore the SSC did not recommend a change.

SSC Review of the effect of recalibrated recreational removals and recreational selectivity on estimates of OFL, ABC, and MSY for Gulf Red Snapper

Dr. Barbieri reported that the SSC reviewed the effects of alternative red snapper allocations for the commercial and recreational sectors. The SSC concluded that if the Council changes the allocation between the two sectors, this would prompt the need to reevaluate the OFL and ABC projections.

Options Paper – Framework Action to set Gag ACL and Recreational Season

Dr. Barbieri reported that gag indices of abundance updated through 2014 by the SEFSC indicate that gag have had below average recruitment since 2010. The SSC recommended that, given the recent declines in fishery dependent and fishery independent indices of abundance for gag, that the Council use caution when setting ACL and ACT for 2015-2017. Council staff reviewed the actions and alternatives in an options paper to set gag ACL and recreational season for 2016-2017. Committee members felt that since they had just seen the options paper, they were not yet prepared to select preferred alternatives.

Hogfish and Mutton Snapper OFL and ABC

Dr. Barbieri reported that based on an FWC mutton snapper update assessment, the mutton snapper stock is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The SSC approved OFL and ABC projections through 2020. These projections are lower than the current mutton snapper ABC because the current assessment used an updated version of the ASAP assessment model that is able

to take into account selectivity and other issues. This resulted in a change in the productivity of the stock which is more reflective of the actual stock status. The mutton snapper stock crosses the Gulf and South Atlantic jurisdictions, with 18% of the stock ABC apportioned to the Gulf in the Generic ACL/AM Amendment. Staff indicated that they would begin development of a framework action to adjust the ACL in Gulf waters.

Dr. Barbieri also reported that the SSC reviewed an FWC hogfish assessment that divided hogfish into three stocks. The west Florida shelf stock is neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The SSC recommended annual OFLs and ABCs through 2018. The SSC considered offering an alternative constant catch ABC, but an analysis of a constant catch scenario had not been done. If the Council requests a constant catch ABC, the SSC can review analysis at its next meeting and report back to the Council. Council staff reported that since this was the first time that a separate west Florida shelf hogfish stock has been identified, a plan amendment would be needed to define the stock in the management unit and set status determination criteria and ACLs.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the Committee recommends, and I so move, that the Council initiate a plan amendment to define a West Florida Shelf hogfish stock with associated status determination criteria and ACLs.

Dr. Barbieri reported that the south Florida/Florida Keys hogfish stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The SSC approved the South Atlantic SSC's OFL and ABC recommendations to rebuild the stock in ten years or less. A small portion of the stock extends into the Gulf Council's jurisdictional waters south of the Monroe/Collier county line and needs to be part of the rebuilding plan. This will be discussed during the joint Gulf and South Atlantic Council meeting.

East Florida/Florida Keys Hogfish Stock Decision Document was covered in **Tab 5E** at the Gulf and South Atlantic Joint Session

Updated Draft Amendment 28 – Red Snapper Allocation

Staff summarized the revisions included in the updated draft of Amendment 28. Committee members discussed the timeline for final action. Dr. Crabtree indicated that the comment period for the DEIS ends July 20 and that final action could be scheduled during the August Council meeting.

Draft Framework Action to Allow NMFS to Withhold a Portion of the Commercial Red Snapper Quota in 2016

Staff presented the management alternatives and noted that the percentage of the 2016 commercial red snapper quota to withhold will be determined once the Council takes final action on Amendment 28 (Red Snapper Allocation). Committee members indicated that final action would be taken during the August Council meeting.

Revised Alternatives – Amendment 39 - Regional Management of Recreational Red Snappers

The Committee discussed the revised actions and alternatives, and the timeline for final action. Staff indicated that a completed draft could be brought to the August meeting for the Council to review and select remaining preferred alternatives, but the DEIS would be filed after the August Council meeting.

Scoping Summaries – Amendment 36 – Red Snapper IFQ Modifications

Staff reviewed the items included in the scoping document and requested guidance as to the items that may be removed from the document and those which the Committee intends to further evaluate in an options paper. The Committee discussed the items and passed the following motions.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the Committee recommends and I so move, to retain the item to restrict future transfer of shares to only shareholder accounts that hold a valid commercial reef fish permit.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the Committee recommends and I so move, to delete the item to allow accounts with shares but without a commercial reef fish permit to harvest the allocation associated with those shares.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the Committee recommends and I so move, to retain the item to limit the amount of shares/allocation non-permitted IFQ accounts may possess.

By a voice vote with no opposition, the Committee recommends and I so move, to eliminate the item to adopt a roll-over provision for unused IFQ allocation.

Based on Committee discussion, the items to eliminate the commercial red snapper minimum size limit and to consider the full retention of commercially caught red snapper will also be removed. Staff will bring an options paper to the October Council meeting.

Grouper/Tilefish IFQ 5-Year Review

Matthew McPherson presented main elements of the draft guidance for the review of catch share programs and provided an overview of the 5-year review of the grouper and tilefish IFQ program. Dr. McPherson noted that a detailed presentation on the guidance for catch share reviews will be provided to the Council once the guidance document is finalized. Larry Perruso discussed the studies initiated or planned for the 5-year review. These studies include evaluations of potential changes in fleet capacity and in fishermen behavior.

Report of the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter For-Hire AP

Staff summarized the report from the AP meeting. AP members passed numerous motions including recommendations to require electronic log books and an allocation-based management plan using permit fishing quotas, or PFQs, with tags for validating landings, as their preferred management approach. The Committee discussed the report and passed the following motion.

By a voice vote with no opposition Committee recommends and I so move, to direct staff to begin developing an options paper for Amendment 41, including consideration of the motions from the charter for hire advisory panel.

Report of the Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat AP

Staff summarized the AP report and discussed the motions made by the AP. The motions approved by the AP cover a range of issues including the establishment of a stand-alone headboat sector, the consideration of allocation-based measures as the preferred management approach for headboats, and the inclusion of key features of the Headboat EFP in Amendment 42. Committee members inquired about the next steps. In response, staff indicated that a draft options paper would be presented during the August meeting.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.