

Greater Amberjack State/Regional Management



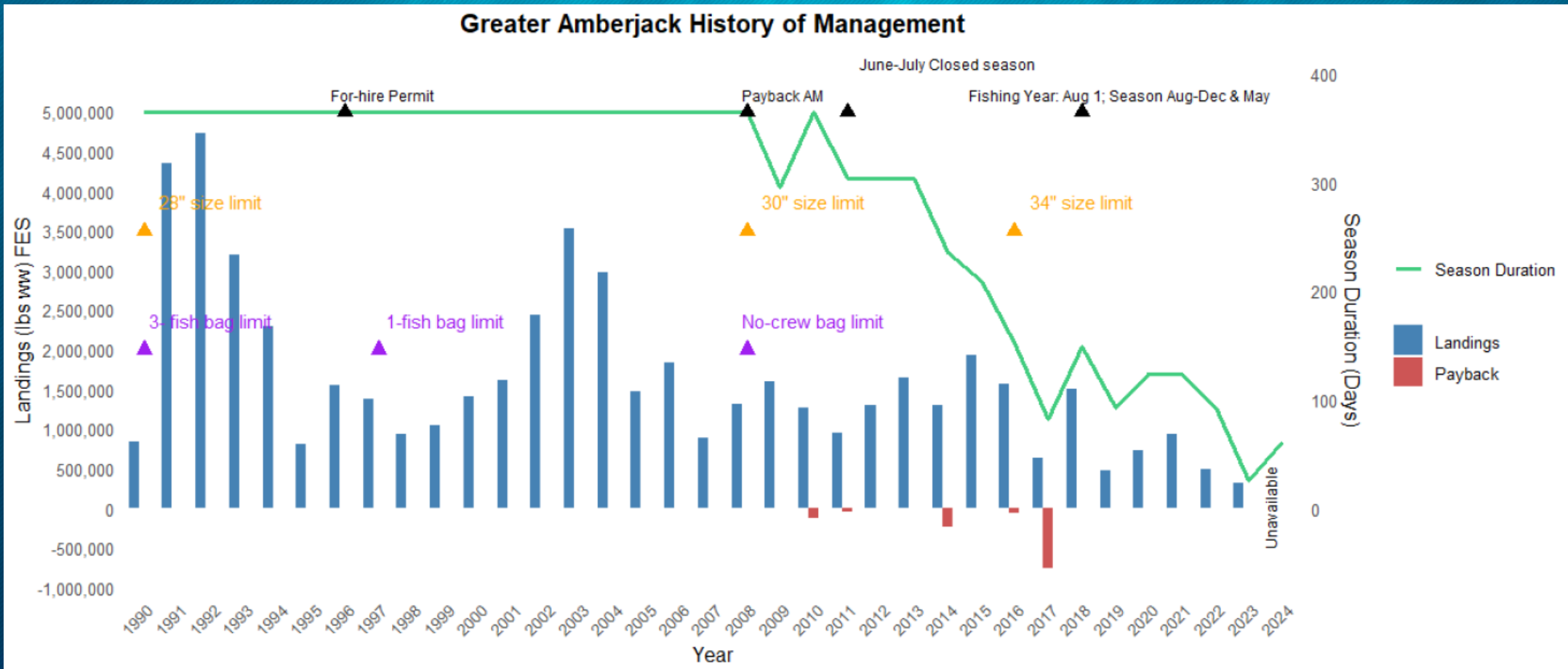
Gulf Council

Purpose of this Presentation



- Provide a structured summary of key decision points for transitioning greater amberjack recreational management to state and/or regional management.
- Incorporate lessons learned from red snapper management while recognizing key differences in stock status and management challenges.
- Identify key considerations such as sector separation, accountability measures, and data limitations and needs for future evaluation.

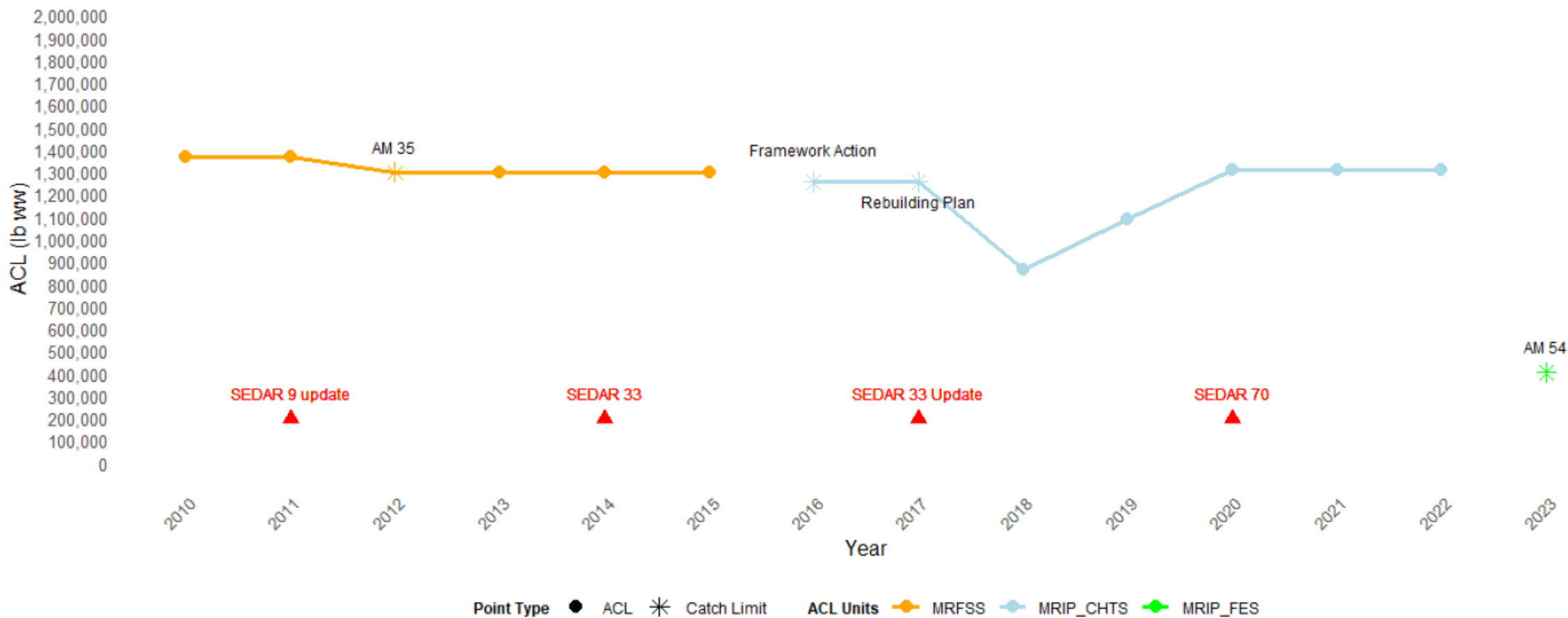
GAJ History of Management



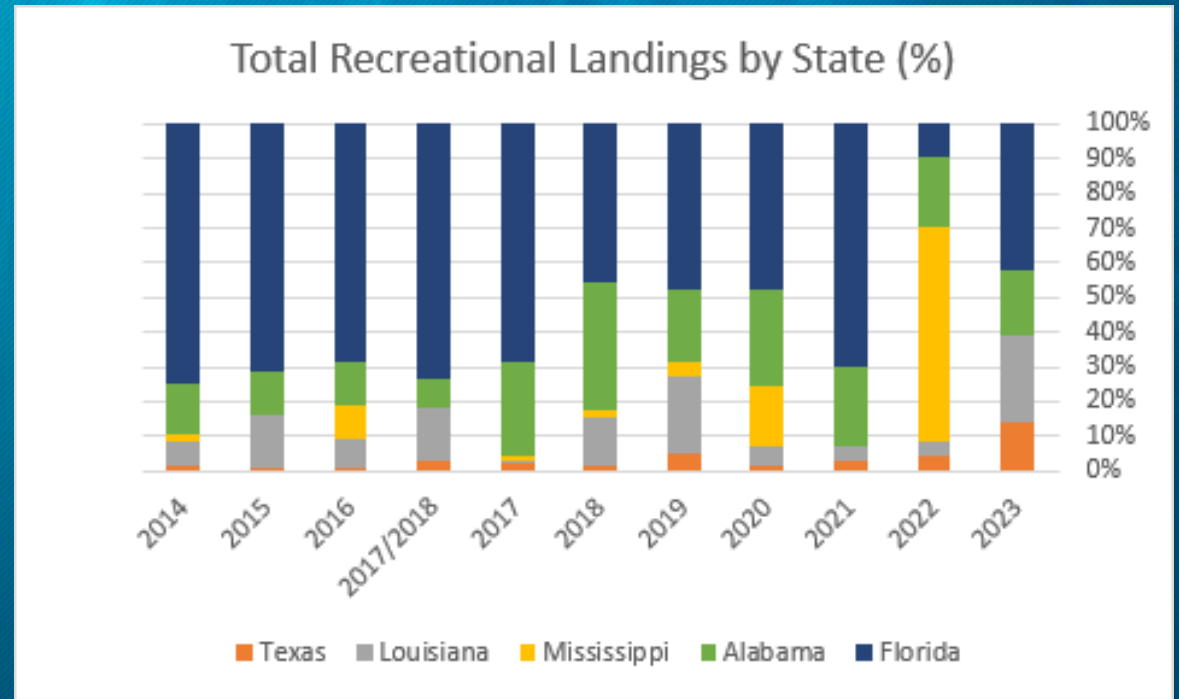
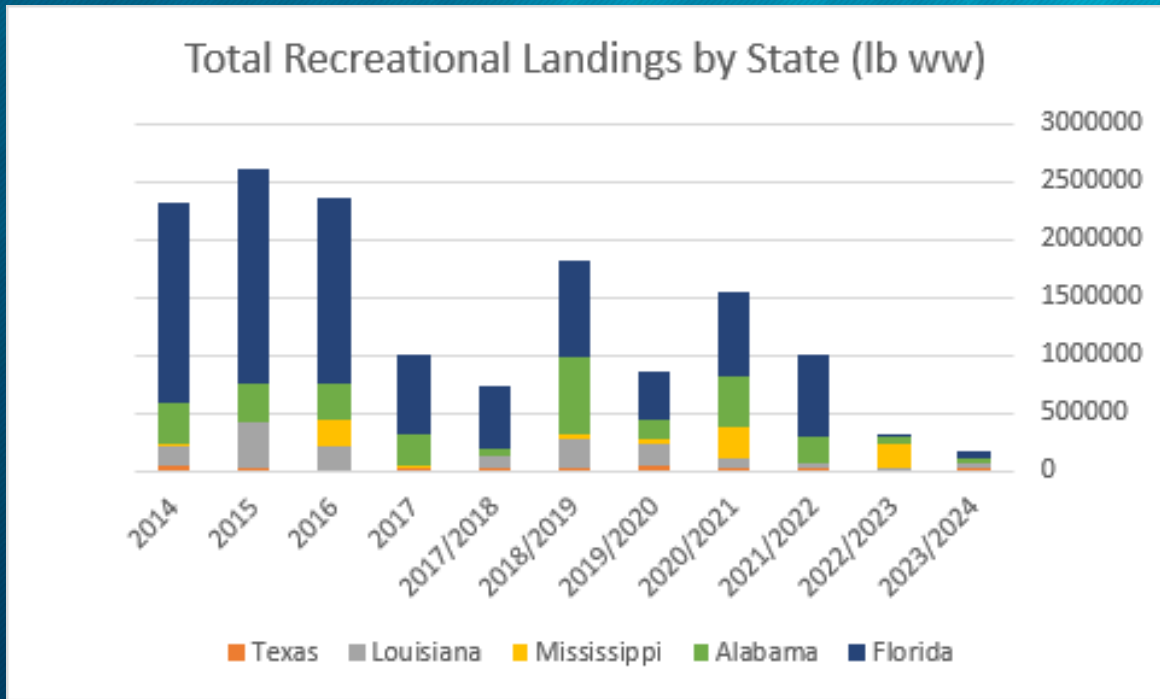
Recreational ACL changes to GAJ



Greater Amberjack Recreational ACL



Total Rec Landings by State





For-Hire vs Private Landings

Year	For-Hire	Private
2014	455,400 (20%)	1,873,568 (80%)
2015	984,534 (37%)	1,634,307 (63%)
2016	672,862 (29%)	1,686,461 (71%)
2017	141,166 (14%)	870,321 (86%)
2018	702,820 (28%)	1,809,055 (72%)
2019	256,460 (37%)	445,019 (63%)
2020	411,407 (28%)	1,039,623 (62%)
2021	414,859 (44%)	530,682 (56%)
2022	103,786 (16%)	563,160 (84%)
2023	102,520 (58%)	72,933 (42%)

Summary of Greater Amberjack Landings 2014 - 2023		
Year	For-Hire	Private Angling
Avg (2004 -2023)	29%	71%
Avg (2014 -2023)	31%	69%
Avg (2019 -2023)	37%	63%

For-Hire Recreational (FES) landings and Private Recreational (FES) Landings for Greater Amberjack in the Gulf in pound whole weight.

Background



Ongoing challenges:

- Greater amberjack is overfished and undergoing overfishing*
- Short seasons due to low ACLs, difficulty constraining landings, triggering punitive AMs
- Ongoing interest in exploring alternative management approaches that may improve outcomes

State or Regional Management could offer:

- More flexibility in setting seasons and regulations
- Greater ability to tailor management to specific regions

* <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2025-02/Q4-2024-quarterly-overfishing-overfished-stocks-2.pdf>. As of Dec 31, 2024.

Red Snapper as a guide



Why State Management Was Implemented for Red Snapper

- Private angling seasons became progressively short despite a rebuilding stock.
- **1980s-1990s:** 180+ days → **2007:** 40 days → **2016:** 9 days → **2017:** Projected 3 days, extended to 39 days by the Secretary of Commerce.
- In 2018, a state management pilot program via Exempted Fishing Permit allowed Gulf states to set their own private angling seasons.
- Amendment 50A (2019) formalized state management, apportioning each state an individual ACL and provided flexibility regarding seasons and other regulations.

Red Snapper State Management



State responsibilities that were delegated:

- Manage their annual allocation of the private angling ACL
- Set minimum size limits within a range, bag limits, and seasonal closures
- Monitor individual private angling ACLs through state-run data collection programs

Accountability Measures:

- In season: Close the season when harvest projected to reach the state specific ACL
- Post season: when harvest > ACT, reduce ACL and ACT by the amount of previous overage (payback). Paybacks are component specific and state specific.

Federal Oversight: Required to meet Magnuson-Stevens Act

- A private angling ACT remains if a state's delegation ends.
- In the red snapper program, the Council elected to maintain the federal for-hire component under federal management

Decision Points



Is the Council interested in considering state, regional, or both as management options?

- **Decision points:**
 1. All recreational components or private angling component only?
 2. What are the management units? (States, regions, other)
 3. What processes should be considered for apportionments?
 - a) If landings data are to be used, what are the appropriate sources to be considered?
 - b) MRIP-FES pilot study still ongoing and subject to change
 - c) Will all state programs capture GAJ landings in the future? Does these require calibration to historical data?
 4. What measures should be considered for delegation or conservation equivalency (e.g., seasons, bag/vessel and or size limits within a range?) Would need to consider Accountability Measures
- **Good news:** Red Snapper can serve as a guide
- **Bad news:** Would want to avoid some of the challenges experienced with red snapper
- Would an FEP be a useful first step?

1. Sector separation

Determine if the Federal For-Hire Fleet is to be included:

- Created separate ACLs and ACTs for private anglers and for-hire vessels (RF 40*)
- Stabilized charter seasons but raised concerns about fairness for private anglers
- A state/regional management plan could be done with or without the federal for-hire component. If separated, need to consider allocation between private angling and for-hire components

Key Consideration for Greater Amberjack

- Could provide stability for the for-hire sector
- Low ACLs divided up into smaller pieces could lead to additional uncertainty
- Adds management complexity

* <https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/RF-40-Final-Draft-12-17-2014.pdf>

2. What are the management units?



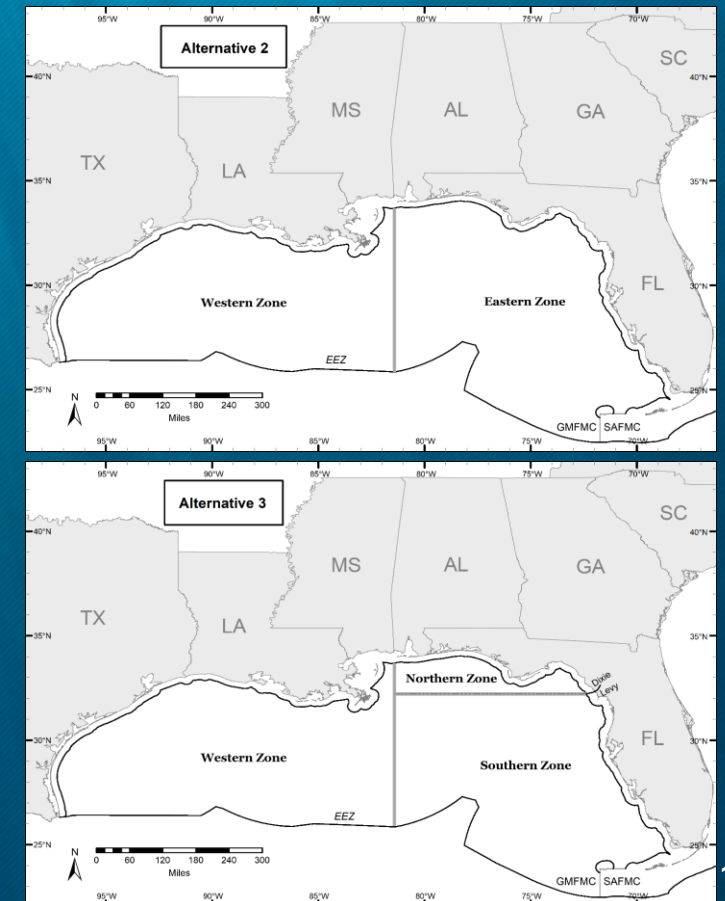
State-Based Delegation of Management (red snapper model)

- Each Gulf state manages its own allocation and regulations.
- Allows flexibility but may create inconsistencies across states.

Regional Management

- Could sub-divide or split the recreational ACL,
- States could be grouped into management regions with shared ACLs and regulations

Regional Mgmt. Examples



3. Allocation process

Options to allocate harvest and monitor landings

- Historical landings (What years?)
- Biomass distribution (Stock assessments, spatial trends?, independent studies e.g., greater amberjack count)
- Negotiated agreement or some combination of approaches
- Decision tool developed for red snapper*

How will data be calibrated into a consistent data unit?

- Do state programs require calibration to historical data?

3. Allocation process cont.

- The Council used a red snapper decision tool used to consider allocation among states in RF 50A
- Considered
 - Landings
 - Reference years
 - Option to include biomass

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Red snapper

Alternative 1 Alternatives 2 - 3 Alternative 4 **Alternative 5**

Alternative 5 would establish an allocation of the recreational sector ACL that may be used for state management programs by apportioning the private angling ACL and federal for-hire ACL among the states based on spatial abundance of red snapper biomass and recreational trips based on the selected recreational components, time series for trips (or landings), and weighting factors.

Explore allocation scenarios using the options below. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1: Select recreational component: Total Private For-hire

***2: Select time series for trips/landings:** 1986 - 2015

3a: Select a weighted value: 5d: 25% biomass, 75% trips | 5e: 50% biomass, 50% trips | 5f: 75% biomass, 25% trips

3b: Or define your own weighting combinations:

	Biomass	Trips	**Landings	Total
	25	75	0	100

Source	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Biomass	29.94%	6.30%	1.34%	20.28%	42.13%
Trips	42.91%	25.00%	3.15%	11.62%	17.32%
Total	31.87%	31.59%	4.86%	17.43%	14.26%
Landings					

Allocation FL AL MS LA TX

Alternative 1 Alternatives 2 - 3 Alternative 4 **Alternative 5**

Allocation based on selected options

Recreational sector: Total
Selected years: 1986 - 2015
Weighting combination: Biomass = 25 Trips = 0 Landings = 75

Selected options for comparison

Component	Years	Biomass	Trips	Landings	Option
Total	1986 - 2015	25	0	75	1

Allocation	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX	Option
Total Allocation	39.67	20.33	2.70	13.78	23.52	1

Document format: PDF HTML Word

4. What management measures could states modify?



Based on Red Snapper Management

- States are allowed to modify bag limits, size limits, and season dates
- Federal catch limits & accountability measures remain in place

Key considerations for Amberjack

- Should states have flexibility to determine bag/vessel limits, size limits (within a range), and seasons? Should other management options be considered for state delegation or conservation equivalency?
- How do we ensure states do not overharvest their allocation?
- Should options such as carryover or interstate transfer be considered?

5. Accountability measures



- States would need to monitor landings in to avoid exceeding Annual Catch Limits (ACL).
- If a state exceeds its allowable harvest, should overages be deducted from the next year's allocation?
- Should states set an Annual Catch Target (ACT) below the ACL to reduce the risk of exceeding catch limits?

Summary of Decision Points



1. Sector separation
2. State or Regional management
3. Apportionment method
4. Delegate Conservation Equivalency management to states or request (e.g., bag limits, season, etc.)
5. Accountability measures
6. Next steps

Questions

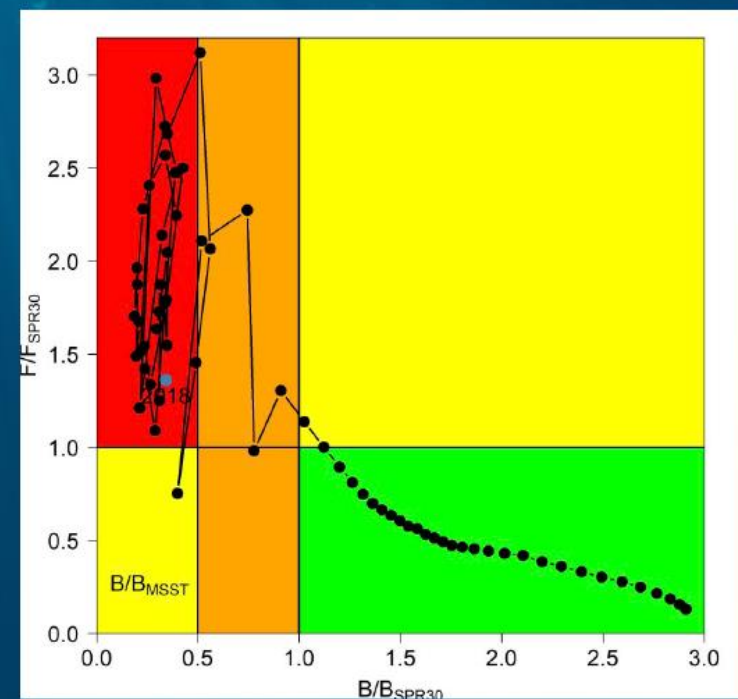


Supplemental



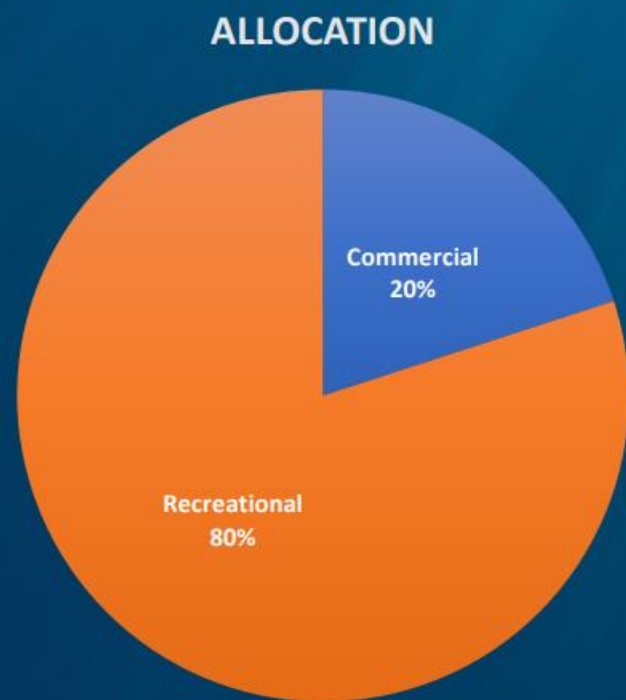
Greater Amberjack

SEDAR	Terminal Year	SPR%	Overfished	Overfishing
<u>SEDAR 9</u>	2004	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 9 Update</u>	2008	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 33</u>	2012	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 33 Update</u>	2015	30%	Yes	Yes
<u>SEDAR 70</u>	2018	30%	Yes	Yes



SEDAR 70, 2020

Supplemental



Season:

Recreational: September 1- October 31

Size limit: 34 in FL

Bag limit:

Recreational: 1

Allocation:

AM 54 revised allocation 73:27 to 80:20

Changes in recreational data collection system

Landings information: changes



Ongoing challenges:

- Mississippi and Alabama transitioning to creel surveys
- MRIP-FES program and landings updates may change pending the outcome of the pilot study and integration into management

Many different recreational data programs in use or anticipated expected that may complicate use of landings in management. Want to avoid calibration issues associated with red snapper management.

- TX Parks and Wildlife Creel Survey
- LA Creel
- MS Creel
- AL Creel
- FL State Reef Fish Survey
- MRIP Survey