

**Reef Fish AP Meeting
Scope of Work**

Agenda Item III: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Action: Elections

Council Input and Next Steps: The Reef Fish AP will nominate and elect a Chair and Vice Chair for the 2024 – 2027 term. The Chair and Vice Chair are responsible for helping to set the agendas, facilitate discussion, and represent the recommendations of the Reef Fish AP to the Council when requested. Elections are conducted by majority vote and will be facilitated by Council staff.

Agenda Item VI: Review of Reef Fish and IFQ Program Landings, and State Program Landings for Red Snapper

Action: Presentations and discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will review the status of reef fish and individual fishing quota (IFQ) program landings relative to catch limits, which was provided to the Council in November 2024. Reef Fish AP members should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Draft Amendment 58A: Modifications to Shallow-water Grouper Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council staff will present management alternatives for modifying the Other Shallow-water Grouper (SWG) complex in light of recent stock assessment advice. Scamp and yellowmouth grouper, and black and yellowfin grouper, are currently managed under a single annual catch limit (ACL), with a commercial ACL and annual catch target (ACT) specified to allow for the functioning of the SWG component of the commercial Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program. Because OFLs and ABCs were specified explicitly by the SSC for the aforementioned pairs of groupers, these species can no longer be managed under a single complex with one ACL because of the possibility of overfishing occurring on either pair. Council staff will present revised actions, discuss the general timeline for implementation, and discuss a forthcoming related framework action to modify catch levels. Reef Fish AP members should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item VIII: Draft Amendment 58B: Modifications to Deep-water Grouper Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council staff will present updated management alternatives for modifying the deep-water grouper (DWG) complex, in light of recent stock assessment advice. Management alternatives for DWG include specifying status determination criteria, catch limits, sector allocations, and accountability measures. DWG catch limits were updated by the SSC following its review of the SEDAR 85 stock assessment for yellowedge grouper which, along with snowy grouper, warsaw grouper, and speckled hind, is a component of the DWG complex. The SSC recommended managing these four DWG species together because of the use of similar data units and to reduce dead discards. Reef Fish AP members should discuss the range of actions and alternatives presented, suggest revisions to (or removal of) any presented management alternatives, and recommend preferred alternatives to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Review: SEDAR 88 Gulf of Mexico Red Grouper Stock Assessment and SSC Recommendations

Action: NONE

Council input and next steps: This item will be reviewed by the Reef Fish AP in 2025, following the SSC's rescheduled review in February 2025.

Agenda Item X: Review of Framework Action: Removal of the 20-fathom Shallow-water Grouper Closure

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: At its April 2024 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin work on a document to explore the removal of the recreational 20-fathom closure for the harvest of red grouper and other shallow-water grouper species (scamp, yellowmouth grouper, black grouper, and yellowfin grouper). This time-area closure is currently in place seaward of the 20-fathom boundary from February 1 through March 31 annually. Council staff will review the management history of the closure and discuss some of the data available on fishing effort in space and time. The Reef Fish AP met on April 23, 2024, and discussed the closure. The RFAP recommended that the Council remove the 20-fathom seaward closure for the recreational sector in February through March. Reef Fish AP members should review the information presented, ask questions, and make any recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XI: Draft Options: Federal For-hire Fishing Season for Red Snapper

Action: Document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: In April 2024, the Council directed staff to re-evaluate the for-hire buffer for red snapper, and the for-hire fishing season. In August 2024, after reviewing the first options draft, the Council decided not to modify the for-hire buffer between the component's ACL and ACT at this time, and to proceed only with evaluating modifying the for-hire fishing season. Council staff will present this action, including a season duration analysis. Reef Fish AP Members should review the information presented and provide recommendations to the Council as appropriate. Council staff will plan to bring this document back to the Council for final action in January 2025.

Agenda Item XII: Presentation: Modifications to Lane Snapper Minimum Size and Recreational Bag Limits

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council staff will present draft options for modifying lane snapper minimum size and recreational daily bag limits. Lane snapper landings have exceeded the ACL in the previous three years. As a result, in-season closures have been implemented. Lane snapper is not managed with sector specific ACLs, but the recreational sector expressed interest in maintaining a year-round fishing season as the fishery has been closing late in the year when other species are also closed to harvest. Thus, the Council directed staff to develop management options that aim to prevent overfishing with the potential to extend the fishing season. Reef Fish AP Members should evaluate the management options presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: Public Comment

Action: Information

Committee input and next steps: Members of the public will be able to address the Reef Fish AP directly with respect to the topics discussed during this meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item XIV: Other Business

Action: Additional items that can be brought up for discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by Committee members during the adoption of the agenda, time permitting. If the Committee wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future Council meeting.
