

**Reef Fish Committee
Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab B**

Agenda Item IV: **FINAL ACTION** – Draft Abbreviated Framework Action: Modifications to the Federal For-Hire Red Snapper Fishing Season

Action: Document, discussion, and recommendation for final action

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 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 modifying the for-hire fishing season. Council staff will review public comments received, and the draft abbreviated framework action, including a season duration analysis. SERO Staff will review the draft codified text for the proposed regulations based on the Council’s current preferred alternative. The Committee should review the information presented and if they find the proposed regulations to be necessary and appropriate, they could recommend that the Council take final action on the document.

Agenda Item V: **FINAL ACTION** – Draft Reef Fish Amendment 58B: Modifications to Deep-water Grouper Management Measures

Action: Document, discussion, and recommendation for final action

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present public comments received on a public hearing draft of Reef Fish Amendment 58B that proposes modifications to the deep-water grouper (DWG) complex, in light of recent stock assessment advice on yellowedge grouper. Management alternatives for DWG include specifying status determination criteria, catch limits, sector allocations, and accountability measures. SERO staff will also review the draft codified text for the proposed federal regulations, based on the current preferred alternatives. The Committee should review the information presented and if they find the proposed regulations to be necessary and appropriate, they could recommend that the Council take final action on the document.

Agenda Item VI: Draft Reef Fish Amendment 58A: Shallow-water Grouper Complex Management Considerations

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Council staff will present updated actions and alternatives for Reef Fish Amendment 58A, which proposes dissolving the current shallow-water grouper complex structure into two new management categories: the scamp complex (scamp and yellowmouth grouper) and the black grouper complex (black grouper and yellowfin grouper). With the creation of these two new complexes, management considerations such as catch levels,

stock determination criteria, sector allocation, accountability measures, and several other management issues will need to be addressed. Additionally, these updates include new yield stream projections for scamp and yellowmouth grouper that the SSC recommended at its May 8, 2025, meeting. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and provide direction to staff as appropriate. Council staff will plan to develop a public hearing draft of the amendment for consideration at the November 2025 Council meeting. In preparation for that, and in addition to the virtual public hearing (webinar), the Committee should recommend public hearing locations, if desired. Consideration of final action on this document will be planned for the January 2026 Council meeting.

Agenda Item VII: Draft Reef Fish Amendment 62: Modifications to Gulf Red Grouper Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present Reef Fish Amendment 62, which will consider management modifications for red grouper based on the results of the most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 88). This stock assessment found red grouper to be healthy, and as a result, the SSC recommended modifications to stock status determination criteria and catch limits. The recent red grouper stock assessment utilized State of Florida’s State Reef Fish Survey instead of from the federal Marine Recreational Information Program for private recreational vessels. The document has proposed actions that consider modifying status determination criteria, catch limits, and sector allocations. It also considers removing the 20-fathom recreational seasonal closure for shallow-water grouper. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and give direction to staff regarding modifications to the actions and alternatives presented. Staff will plan to bring a revised draft for the Committee to consider at the November 2025 Council meeting. Council staff will plan to develop a public hearing draft of the amendment for consideration at the November 2025 Council meeting. In preparation for that, and in addition to the virtual public hearing (webinar), the Committee should recommend public hearing locations, if desired. Consideration of final action on this document will be planned for the January 2026 Council meeting.

Agenda Item VIII: Review of Recreational Initiative Recommendations and Prioritization

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will review the Recreational Initiative Working Group’s outcomes and recommendations presented at the April 2025. Council staff developed a table with the 19 working group recommendations and sorted them by type of action (education or management), status of action, timeline to action, and contributors required to complete the action. The Committee should review the recommendations and prioritize any potential action items for the Council to consider, and of those that are selected, prioritize action. In prioritizing the Working Group recommendations, it would be advantageous to consider pre-existing staffing constraints amongst Council staff, SERO and the SEFSC. Additionally, it would be prudent to

consider which recommendations align with Executive order 14276 (Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness) and 14192 (Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation) to meet overarching goals of the current administration.

Agenda Item IX: Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 55 / Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 – Modifications to Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper Management Measures

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council input and next steps: Reef Fish Amendment 55 / Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 was initially a joint amendment to consider modifications to southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper management between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils (Councils). Recently, new stock assessments have been completed for southeastern U.S. mutton snapper (SEDAR 79) and yellowtail snapper (SEDAR 96). Both of these stock assessments estimated their respective species to be healthy as of 2023, with northward range expansion evident in both stocks in the Gulf. As such, the Councils will now consider both of these species in Reef Fish Amendment 55 / Snapper Grouper Amendment 44. This amendment will have a single action to consider modification of the respective stock OFLs, stock ABCs, and jurisdictional apportionment of the stock ABCs by species. The Gulf Council will see these proposed alternatives first at this August 2025 meeting, followed by the South Atlantic Council at its September 2025 meeting. The Councils will pass this back and forth to agree upon the same preferred alternatives before taking mutual final action. The Committee should review the proposed action and alternatives presented and recommend modifications to the Councils as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: 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.
