

**Anonymous Voicemail Public Comment Summary**  
**October 29, 2025 – January 20, 2026**  
([Link to full text comments](#))

**Issues Under Council Consideration:**

**Shallow-Water Grouper Management**

- A charter captain from the west coast of Florida reported significantly increased harvest of shallow-water grouper from recreational and for-hire vessels due to:
  - Seasonal closures of gag grouper.
  - Red grouper being inaccessible due to depth during typical hogfish trips.
  - The accessibility of shallow-water reefs (approximately 30–45 feet).
- A recreational fisherman from the Florida Panhandle requested removal of the shallow-water grouper closure because it's confusing and difficult to enforce.
- A commenter opposed seasonal closures of scamp grouper, noting limited winter fishing opportunities in the Florida Panhandle and suggested a reduction in the scamp bag limit as an alternative to a closed season

**Red Grouper Management**

- The commenter expressed the view that red grouper stocks appear healthy and recommended maintaining current size and bag limits while allowing year-round harvest.

**State Management of For-Hire Vessels**

- A long-time commercial and recreational fisherman, expressed strong opposition to transferring fisheries management to the states based on a lack of confidence in state management capacity.

**Other Issues:**

**Council Operations and Permitting**

- A commenter questioned why the Council was able to hold meetings out of state during a government shutdown while permit renewals were unavailable, expressing concern about fairness and consistency in federal operations.

**Shark Depredation**

- A commenter reported substantial shark depredation in shallow-water fisheries estimating that multiple fish are lost to sharks for every fish successfully landed and expressed concern that many undersized released fish are also subject to predation.

## **Hogfish**

- A commenter indicated that concern that current hogfish harvest levels may not be sustainable given fishing pressure and depredation. Supported maintaining the existing 14-inch minimum size limit and reducing allowable harvest by:
  - Lowering per-person bag limits, and
  - Implementing a vessel-level harvest limit.