

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

Agenda Item IV: **FINAL ACTION** – Reef Fish Amendment 63: Modifications to Gulf Red Grouper IFQ Program

Action: **Final Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will review a summary of input received at public hearings, and written comments received on the public hearing draft for Reef Fish Amendment 63. This regulatory action addresses management measures necessary to develop a three-year program to set aside a portion of the red grouper commercial quota to be distributed to eligible participants in the grouper/tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. Staff will review the Council’s preferred alternatives for set aside amounts, criteria for qualifying for set aside allocation, and methods for distributing the resulting allocation. Council staff will also review recommendations from the Ad Hoc Red Snapper / Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel (AP). The Committee should review the information presented and evaluate the Council’s preferred alternatives as appropriate. SERO staff will review the codified text of the proposed federal regulations. If the Committee finds the proposed regulations to be necessary and appropriate, it should recommend that the Council take final action on the document to transmit it to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation.

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

Action: Document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Reef Fish Amendment 55 / Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 is a joint amendment to consider modifications to southeastern U.S. mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper management between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils (Councils). New stock assessments were 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. This amendment considers modification of the respective stock catch limits, jurisdictional apportionment of the respective stock ABCs and setting of regional ACLs, and South Atlantic sector allocations for both species within the South Atlantic Council’s jurisdiction. The Gulf Council does not use sector allocations for these species, and as such, the sector allocation actions in practice apply only to the South Atlantic Council. This version of the document also includes updated fishery closure analyses based on the current alternatives, found in Appendix D. The Councils will pass this document back and forth to agree upon the same preferred alternatives before taking mutual final action. The Committee should review the proposed actions and alternatives and recommend modifications to the Councils as appropriate. Staff will plan to develop a public hearing draft for the Councils to evaluate in the fall of 2026.

Agenda Item VI: Draft Options – Modifications to Red Snapper Private Recreational Post-Season Accountability Measures

Action: Presentation, document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will provide an overview of options for modifying private recreational accountability measures for red snapper. Presently, if a Gulf state's landings exceed its state-specific annual catch limit in a fishing year, then in the following year, that state's annual catch limit will be reduced by the amount of the overage in the previous year. The presentation will review alternatives to modify the post-season accountability measures. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, make recommendations, and discuss next steps, as needed.

Agenda Item VII: Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 59A: Permit Requirements in IFQ Programs

Action: Document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present an overview of Draft Reef Fish Amendment 59A, an amendment addressing permit requirements in the red snapper and grouper/tilefish IFQ programs. Permit requirements include the ownership of valid or renewable commercial reef fish permits for shareholder account, share and annual allocation ownership. Council staff will also review recommendations from the Council's Ad Hoc Red Snapper / Grouper-Tilefish IFQ AP. The Committee should review the information presented, make recommendations, and recommend next steps, as needed.

Agenda Item VIII: Draft Amendment 65 – Regional Management of Recreational Greater Amberjack

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present decision points and options for considering regional management of recreational greater amberjack. The purpose of regional management is to provide flexibility in setting recreational seasons, improving harvest monitoring, and reduce discards by targeting greater amberjack during desired times of the year. The Committee will need to consider several tradeoffs when developing a management plan for greater amberjack. The major decision points to be presented will be whether to include the federal for-hire component of the recreational fishery in regional management, state boundary or regional management boundaries, allocation, a common data currency, specific management tools, and accountability measures. The Committee should ask questions of staff, provide staff direction on the decision points presented, and discuss next steps, as needed.

Agenda Item IX: May 2026 SSC Meeting Presentation and Meeting Summary

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Mr. Trevor Moncrief (Chair, Scientific and Statistical Committee [SSC]) will review SSC discussions about the Gulf Fishery-Independent Survey of Habitat and Ecosystem Resources (G-FISHER) survey, which serves as an index of relative abundance and source of composition data for many Gulf reef fish species. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: Discussion – Exempted Fishing Permits

Action: Documents, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: The Committee will hear summaries of proposed exempted fishing permits for state management of recreational greater amberjack from Gulf state representatives. The proposals will discuss how each state intends to manage recreational greater amberjack within its respective jurisdictional boundary, including fishing seasons, minimum size limits, bag limits, and other features. The Committee will also hear an update from the State of Florida regarding an exempted fishing permit for Gulf gag grouper. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XI: 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.
