

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

Agenda Item IV: Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 64: Delegate Federal For-Hire Red Snapper Management to Gulf States

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will give a presentation on Reef Fish Amendment 64, an amendment addressing the delegation of the federal for-hire management authority for red snapper to Gulf States. The amendment includes specific management measures, e.g., season length and bag and size limits, to delegate to states and measures to allocate the federal for-hire component annual catch target (ACT) among the states, delegation sunset provisions, and accountability measures. The Committee should review the purpose and need for action and management actions included in the amendment. The Committee should suggest revisions, provide recommendations, including feedback on the list of actions to consider for the continued development of this amendment, and discuss next steps, as needed.

Agenda Item V: Draft Options – Management Flexibility for the Federal For-hire Component of the Red Snapper Fishery

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present options for delegating authority for modifying specific management measures to the NMFS Southeast Regional Administrator for the federal for-hire component for red snapper. The presentation reviews the current management structure and its performance and proposes a purpose and need while seeking clarification from the Council. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and provide direction to Council staff as appropriate. The Committee should also consider other actions that are likely to affect, or be affected by, this proposed document, and the timing of the current red snapper stock assessment.

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

Action: Presentation, document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present a draft framework action to modify 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 the current accountability measures. The Committee

should discuss the alternative and options presented, ask questions, make recommendations, consider selecting preferred alternatives, and discuss next steps, as needed.

Agenda Item VII: July 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 discussions from the July 2026 Gulf SSC meeting. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

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

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will give a presentation on 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 to open and/or maintain shareholder accounts and own and maintain shares and annual allocation. The amendment also includes divestment measures for non-compliant accounts and management measures to exempt non-profit organizations from permit requirements. The Committee should review previously selected preferred alternatives and discuss criteria for granting exemptions from the permit requirements. The Committee should evaluate the information presented, make recommendations, and discuss next steps.

Agenda Item IX: Discussion: Decision Points for Red Snapper Catch Limits and Allocations

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: The red snapper stock assessment, SEDAR 98 is nearing completion, pending peer review and inclusion of updated recreational landings and other data. In preparation of receiving updated catch advice for red snapper, Council staff will review a presentation which highlights the decision points and timing for consideration of revised sector, component, and state allocations for red snapper. These decisions will need to begin with allocations between the largest components (i.e., between the commercial and recreational fishing sectors), then between the fishing sector components (i.e., between the federal for-hire and private vessel modes of the recreational sector), and lastly, among the five Gulf states for the private vessel mode. Allocation decisions can be tailored to the division being addressed but should be consistent in application and clear in justification. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to Council staff as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: Public Hearing Draft – 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 apply only to the South Atlantic Council. The Committee should review the actions and preferred alternatives and recommend any modifications to the Councils as appropriate. If the Committee agrees, it should recommend that the Gulf Council approve the document for webinar public hearings in the Gulf. The South Atlantic Council will review the Gulf Council’s recommendations at its September 2026 meeting. Council staffs are presently planning on bringing the document back to the Councils for final action consideration in October for the Gulf Council and December for the South Atlantic Council.

Agenda Item XI: 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 should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

Agenda Item XII: Overview: Understanding Catch Per Unit Effort from Fishery-Independent and -Dependent Indices of Relative Abundance

Action: Presentation and discussion

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Council Input and Next Steps: Dr. Mike Allen will present an overview of catch per unit effort (CPUE) and benefits and limitations to its use for fishery-independent and fishery-dependent indices to the Committee. Dr. Allen will explain how CPUE can be used to infer stock abundance and outline some cautions and considerations when being presented CPUE information as an index of stock abundance. Recently, the Reef Fish AP has suggested calculating CPUE of several reef fish species using fishery-dependent data to examine stock condition. Additionally, the SEFSC has been providing the SSC “health check” updates for several assessed stocks using fishery-independent (G-FISHER, NMFS Bottom Longline Survey) derived CPUE estimates as indices of relative abundance. The Committee should review the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: 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.
