Reef Fish Committee
Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab B

Agenda Item IV: Presentation: Reef Fish and IFQ Landings Update

Action: Presentation and discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will review the status of reef fish and individual fishing quota (IFQ) program landings relative to catch limits, which is provided for the Committee's information only. The 2026 recreational landings data from the NOAA Office of Science and Technology are unavailable at this time. Council representatives from the five Gulf States will also review their 2025 private angling fishing seasons for red snapper and offer projections for the 2026 fishing season as appropriate. The states will also characterize available data for effort, observed mean lengths and weights for red snapper. In addition, the five Gulf states will also present their state survey-generated landings, effort, lengths and weights for greater amberjack, as available. These data are part of an ongoing report to the Council that requires no action by the Committee. Committee members should consider the information presented and ask questions as appropriate.

Agenda Item V: **FINAL ACTION** – Reef Fish Amendment 55/Snapper Grouper Amendment 44: Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper Management Measures

Action: **Final 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 estimated these respective species to be healthy as of 2023, with northward range expansion evident in both stocks. 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 Councils will pass this document back and forth to agree upon taking mutual final action. Council staff will review public comments received during the October 20, 2026, virtual hearing. SERO staff will review the proposed codified text with the Committee. The Committee should review the actions and preferred alternatives and recommend any modifications to the Councils as appropriate. If the Committee finds the proposed regulations to be necessary and appropriate, it should recommend that the Council take final action on the document. The South Atlantic Council will review the Gulf Council's recommendations and consider taking final action at its December 2026 meeting.

Agenda Item VI: **FINAL ACTION** – Modifications to Gulf of America Red Snapper Private Recreational Accountability Measures

Action: **Final Action:** Document, discussion, and action

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present a 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. Council staff will review public comments received. SERO staff will review the proposed codified text with the Committee. The Committee should review the actions and preferred alternative and recommend any modifications to the Council as appropriate. If the Committee finds the proposed regulations to be necessary and appropriate, it should recommend that the Council take final action on the document.

Agenda Item VII: Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 66: 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, a purpose and need, and proposed actions and alternatives based on Committee and Council input from the August 2026 Council meeting. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and provide direction to staff as appropriate. Staff will plan to bring a formal options draft of the amendment for Council consideration at a future Council meeting.

Agenda Item VIII: Presentation – Greater Amberjack Count

Action: Presentation, document, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Drs. Sean Powers (University of South Alabama, Scientific and Statistical Committee [SSC]) and Mark Albins (University of South Alabama) will summarize the results of the Greater Amberjack Count, which was a multi-institutional study conducted in the Gulf and South Atlantic to estimate the absolute abundance of greater amberjack within those respective regions. The study underwent a peer-review in the Council office in Tampa in April 2026, and was published in a report to the U.S. Congress thereafter. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make any recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Draft – Reef Fish Amendment 65: Regional Management of Recreational Greater Amberjack

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Council staff will present options for considering greater amberjack for regional management. The presentation examines using Amendment 50 as an initial framework for developing regional management for greater amberjack. For this exploration, the presentation includes a comparison of red snapper and greater amberjack landings histories, average recreationally harvested size, and current stock status. The presentation also includes considerations for recreational sector separation, state management, and regional management with allocation being informed by catch histories analogous to those used in Amendment 50. Additionally, the presentation will include some identified challenges of solely using catch histories of greater amberjack to inform the Council's allocation decisions for sector-separation and state management alternatives. The Committee should consider the information presented, ask questions, and provide direction to Council staff as appropriate.

Agenda Item X: September 2026 SSC Meeting Summary

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: Mr. Trevor Moncrief (Chair, SSC) will review discussions from the September 2026 Gulf SSC meeting. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

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

Action: Presentation, document, 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 the information presented, including eligibility criteria non-profit organizations must meet to apply for or renew exemptions. The Committee should suggest revisions, make recommendations, and discuss next steps.

Agenda Item XII: Discussion – Exempted Fishing Permits

Action: Documents, discussion, and recommendations

Council Input and Next Steps: The Committee will hear a summary of a proposed exempted fishing permit for RESTORE Gulf Fish Spawning Aggregations. The Committee should review the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations to the Council and SERO 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.
