

Gulf Reef Fish Committee Report
June 9th, 2015
Johnny Greene-Chair

Draft Options Paper- Joint South Florida Management Issues-

Ms. Bademan provided a short presentation on South Florida management issues including a summary of the scoping workshops held by Florida FWC.

Next, the committee discussed the purpose and need of the Joint South Florida document. They directed staff to make the following modifications: modify the purpose to read “**The purpose of this amendment is to provide consistent fisheries management measures to reef fish species unique to the south Florida region**”...

“**The need for this amendment is to increase the public’s awareness and compliance with differing regulations based on separate regulatory agencies across adjacent bodies of water (i.e., Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and State of Florida waters). This....**”

The committee reviewed the actions and alternatives in the document.

Action 1-Partial Delegation of Commercial and/or Recreational Management of Yellowtail Snapper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

The Gulf Committee recommends, and I so move: to make Alternatives 2a, 2b and 2c in Action 1 the preferred alternatives.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for yellowtail snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Motion carried.

The Gulf Reef Fish committee did not see a need to specify any additional minor modifications to the existing allowable gear for delegation to the State of Florida for recreational or commercial management. Therefore, **the Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: that options 2d and 3d be moved to considered but rejected.**

Motion carried.

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 3d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: that these actions (Action 1) apply to the waters adjacent to the state of Florida.

Motion carried.

Staff discussed the Magnuson-Stevens Act delegation provision. NOAA General Counsel advised that the State of Florida would not need to submit a management plan if delegation of management to the state is implemented. As direction to staff the committee passed the following motion and requested it be reflected throughout the document.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: to remove the discussion of the State of Florida submitting management plans from the document that pertain to delegation.

Motion carried.

Action 2: Establish and Consolidate ABCs and ACLs for Yellowtail Snapper

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: In Action 2, clarify that this action pertains to the entire Gulf & South Atlantic jurisdictions.

Motion carried.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee discussed selecting preferred alternatives in Action 2. NOAA General Counsel suggested waiting until a more complete analysis was available. Specifically, analysis of the no action alternative should better describe methodology and years of historical landings that were used for the commercial and recreational ACLs established by the South Atlantic Council and the stock ACL for the Gulf Council.

Action 3-Partial Delegation of Commercial and/or Recreational Management of Mutton Snapper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee did not see a need to specify any additional minor modifications to the existing allowable gear for delegation to the State of Florida for recreational or commercial management. **The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: In Action 3, to move Alternatives 2d and 3d to considered but rejected.**

Motion carried.

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 3d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: That Action 3 be applied to waters adjacent to the State of Florida.

Motion carried.

Action 4-Partial Delegation of Commercial and/or Recreational Management of Mutton Snapper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: To have Action 4 apply to the entire Gulf and South Atlantic jurisdictions.

Motion carried.

Action 5 – Modify Mutton Snapper Recreational Limits in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

No Gulf Reef Fish Committee motions were made regarding Action 5.

Action 6 – Modify Mutton Snapper Commercial Trip Limit in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: In Action 6 have Alternative 4 be moved to considered but rejected.

Motion carried.

Alternative 4: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper that is identical to the recreational bag limit during the spawning season (May and June) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: To apply Action 6 to the entire Gulf and South Atlantic jurisdictions.

Motion carried.

Action 7 – Partial Delegation of Recreational Management of Black Grouper to the State of Florida in Federal Waters Adjacent to the State of Florida

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: Motion: To have Action 7 apply to the waters adjacent to the State of Florida.

Motion carried.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee did not see a need to specify any additional minor modifications to the existing allowable gear for delegation to the State of Florida for recreational management. **The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: In Action 7, Alternative 2d be moved to considered but rejected.**

Motion carried.

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Action 8 – Establish and Consolidate ABCs and ACLs for Black Grouper

No Gulf Reef Fish Committee motions were made regarding Action 8.

Action 9 – Modify Shallow-water Grouper Species Compositions and Seasonal Closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic

No Gulf Reef Fish Committee motions were made regarding Action 9.

Action 10 – Modify Black Grouper Fishery Closures and Bag Limits in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Action 11 – Harmonize bag and size limits for species in shallow-water grouper complex seasonal closures in Federal Waters Adjacent to Monroe County, Florida

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee discussed Actions 10 and 11 in the current draft options paper as well as the proposed restructured actions (Tab B, No 4c). Based on staff’s explanation of the overlapping nature of the current alternatives, without the needed specific information required for further analysis of how to harmonize bag and size limits management measures, the committee made the following motion. NOAA General Counsel requested that the “South Florida Management Area” in the proposed restructured actions be defined. Staff suggested this be defined during the Joint Council session on Thursday.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee recommends, and I so move: To remove Actions 10 and 11 in the Options Paper and replace them with Actions 6, 7 and 8 in the Restructured Document.
Motion carried.

From proposed restructured document action titles:

Action 6: Standardize Recreational Seasonal Closures for Grouper in the South Florida Management Area within the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils’ Jurisdictions

Action 7: Recreational Grouper Bag Limits in the South Florida Management Area within the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils’ Jurisdictions

Action 8: Modify Recreational Grouper Size Limits in the South Florida Management Area within the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils’ Jurisdictions

Action 12 – Changes to Circle Hook Requirements in the Gulf and South Atlantic Jurisdictional Waters

No Gulf Reef Fish Committee motions were made regarding Action 12.

Action 13 – Specify Accountability Measures for South Florida Species.

The Gulf Reef Fish Committee deferred discussion of the accountability measures action until the Joint Session on Thursday based on decisions made in the earlier actions and alternatives.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.