

How to comment at the public hearing

1. **Fill out a public input card which will be available at the meeting (you will be limited to 3 minutes so be ready with your notes!)**
2. **When you're called, state your name, your affiliation (FRA, Fishing Club affiliations, etc) what type of angler you are.**
3. **Tell them what your impression is of the present status of the Red Snapper fishery**
4. **Tell them that the science used to establish this rule is weak and conflicts with your personal observations.**
5. **Tell them NOT TO PASS THE AMENDMENT!**
6. **Additional suggestions for comments are below.**

Amendment 17A – Red Snapper & bottom closure

-ACL and ABC recommendations should be put on hold until such time as National Marine Fisheries Service meets its charge under Magnuson to significantly improve recreational data collection. Setting ACL's and AM's without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; the finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable. It will surely result in litigation.

-The current stock of Red Snapper is healthy and growing. This is proof that the current regulations are correct and working.

-We oppose any changes in the Red Snapper regulations until such time as there is reliable data to upon which to base any changes.

-The stock assessment and historical data are based upon a failed attempt to determine the stocks of Snapper before 1980.

-Because there are different sets of data from before 1980, the baseline date for stock assessments for Grouper/Snapper must be reset to 1980 instead the arbitrary date of 1945. A new assessment must be done before any regulations can be implemented.

-Dr. Frank Hester has proven that significant flaws exist in the assessment and the Council must act upon this new information that he has provided, reassessing the stocks accordingly.

-The 7 to 6 vote on the interim rule shows the slimmest margin of support necessary. Six Council members disagree with the interim rule. The potential social and economic impact is staggering; yet 7 people's votes inflict billions in economic damage, damage which is unnecessary in the eyes of reasonable people.

-The closure will shut down the charter fishing fleets and cause loss of jobs in marinas, bait shops, restaurants etc. There has not been an economic impact study done for the South Atlantic. The current study extrapolates information from 2 boats in 1 port in the panhandle to the entire South Atlantic region.

-In the State of Florida according to the Florida Wildlife Commission in 2008 Saltwater fishing generated \$3,141,005,027 in retail sales, generated \$326, 166,528 in sales taxes, had a total economic impact of \$5,369,293,552 and creates 54,508 jobs. This economy will be severely impacted by this closure.

-We support the use of circle hooks and venting tools to reduce mortality. This reduction in mortality will serve to further strengthen the stocks.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 17B

-ACL and ABC recommendations should be put on hold until such time as National Marine Fisheries Service meets its charge under Magnuson to significantly improve recreational data collection. Setting ACL's and AM's without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; the finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable. It will surely result in litigation.

1.1 Speckled hind/warsaw grouper

We support Alternative 1 (Status Quo).

There is no basis for any changes to the fishery.

1.2 Golden Tilefish

We support none of the Alternatives. Any allocation decision for a low frequency of encounter fishery based on MRFSS is wrong. The fatally flawed data simply does not adequately account for recreational landings, and as such cannot be reliably used. An alternative for a rec daily bag limit should be enacted until such time as NMFS meets its mandate to provide a reliable data collection system for making such allocation decisions.

National Standard 4 requires "such allocation shall be (A) fair and equitable to all such fishermen"

Golden Tilefish ACL & AM

-ACL and ABC recommendations should be put on hold until such time as National Marine Fisheries Service meets its charge under Magnuson to significantly improve recreational data collection. Setting ACL's and AM's without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; the finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable. It will surely result in litigation.

We do not support any of the proposed alternatives.

We do however support a modified Alternative 5 in which the accountability measure for the recreational anglers annual catch limit is **not** tied in any way to the commercial limit.

1.3 Snowy grouper

We object to all of the alternatives. The recreational anglers must be given reasonable access to the Snowy Grouper. We urge the Council to adopt an alternative that sets the recreational limit of 1 Snowy Grouper (Included in the 3 grouper aggregate)

1.4 Black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper

-ACL and ABC recommendations should be put on hold until such time as National Marine Fisheries Service meets its charge under Magnuson to significantly improve recreational data collection. Setting ACL's and AM's without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; the finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable. It will surely result in litigation.

We support Alternative 1 which maintains the current regulations.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 18

1: Extend the range of the snapper grouper FMP north

We support Alternative 1.

We do not support the extension of the Snapper Grouper fishery management plan north beyond the North Carolina/Virginia border. Federal management has been inadequate in managing the areas within the region; this extension would only extend the lack of adequate management effort s into other areas and diverts valuable resources and attention away from the main area of concern in the South Atlantic.

2: Limit participation and effort in the golden tilefish fishery

None of the alternatives are justified.

We object to all of the alternatives. The recreational anglers must be given reasonable access to the Snowy Grouper. National Standard 4 must not be ignored.

3: Modifications to management of the black sea bass pot fishery

None of the alternatives are justified.

All pot fishing must be eliminated.

4: Separate snowy grouper quota into regions/states

-Separating any fishery without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; The finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable.

We support alternative 1.

5: Separate the gag recreational allocation into regions/states

-Separating any fishery without the proper data is like building a house on a fatally flawed foundation; The finest carpentry in the world will be rendered useless by the crumbling foundation. This ignoring of the data collection problem for the pursuit of fishing closures is unconscionable. It will surely result in litigation.

We support alternative 1.

6: Change the golden tilefish fishing year

None of the alternatives are acceptable.

Exclusion of recreational participation is unacceptable for an open fishery.

7: Improve the accuracy, timing, and quantity of fisheries statistics.

We support Alternative 2. (Voluntary recreational logbook)

We cannot support any changes to the regulations until reliable statistics are available

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