



# South Atlantic Update

Published for fishermen and others interested in marine resource conservation issues Summer 2007

## Amendment 14 Approved for Submission to the Secretary of Commerce

*Amendment creates a series of eight deepwater marine protected areas in the South Atlantic region*

"I've waited 16 years to say this," said Council member David Cupka. He followed with an emphatic "Yes!", as a roll call vote was conducted on a motion made by fellow Council member Susan Shipman to approve Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. His answer was part of a unanimous and precedent setting vote for approval of the amendment to implement a series of eight deepwater marine protected areas in the South Atlantic region.

The marine protected areas, ranging in size from 8 to 150 square nautical miles, have been designated to protect a portion of the long-lived, deepwater snapper grouper species complex and their associated habitat from directed fishing pressure. The areas have been designated as "Type 2" MPAs. This designation specifies that while the areas are closed to fishing for snapper grouper species, trolling for pelagic species such as tuna, billfish, and dolphin will be allowed. A provision in Amendment 14 will allow fishermen to transit the areas with snapper grouper species with specific regulations for stowing fishing gear while crossing the areas. The amendment also includes a provision to prohibit the use of shark bottom longline gear in the areas.

"I believe the unanimous vote to forward Amendment 14 to the Secretary of Commerce is the right decision for this Council and is resultant from a long and open process," said Council Chairman, George Geiger. "The amendment is ultimately an action which will in some measure protect habitat of, as well as populations of deep water stocks...and ultimately aid in rebuilding these stocks. I am proud to have been on the Council during the final deliberations and vote."

### A Long Road

As the two longest serving members on the current Council, both Susan Shipman and David Cupka have witnessed first hand the open, lengthy, and sometimes frustrating process that led to the unanimous approval of Amendment 14 at the Council's June meeting in Key West. The potential for using "marine reserves" in the South Atlantic region first originated

*(continued on page 7)*



Gilbert Hanks, a seasonal resident of Key West, Florida holds a golden tilefish caught during a half-day charter fishing trip from A&B Marina. A recreational bag limit of one fish per person and strict commercial limits were put into place in 2006 to end overfishing for golden tilefish. New marine protected areas will help protect stocks of deepwater species, such as golden tilefish and their associated habitats. One of the eight proposed MPA sites will be located off the Florida Keys near Islamorada.

As avid recreational fishermen, Gilbert and his wife Vicki enjoy fishing for deepwater species and expressed support for management measures to ensure their sustainability. Read more about the MPA sites on pages 6-7 inside.

### Public Scoping Sessions Scheduled in early September for

### Snapper Grouper Amendment 16:

### Gag grouper and vermilion snapper

Public input solicited on reductions in harvest needed to end overfishing for these two species.

*(See page 5 for details)*

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(252) 726-7021

**Mark Robson**  
Tallahassee, FL  
(850) 487-0554

**Susan Shipman**  
Brunswick, GA  
(912) 264-7218

**Robert Boyles**  
Charleston, SC  
(843) 953-9304

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Grassy Key, FL  
(305) 743-7162

**Rita Merritt**  
Wrightsville Beach, NC  
(910) 256-3197

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St. Simons Island, GA  
(912) 638-9430

**Tom Swatzel**  
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(843) 357-1673

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(561) 388-3183

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(912) 437-6797

**David Cupka**  
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(843) 795-8591

**Benjamin M. Currin**  
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(919) 881-0049

### NMFS Regional Administrator

**Roy Crabtree**  
St. Petersburg, FL  
(727) 824-5301

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**ASMFC**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 289-6400

**U. S. Fish & Wildlife**  
Atlanta, GA  
(404) 331-3588

**U. S. Coast Guard**  
Miami, FL  
(305) 415-6778

**State Department**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 647-2883

## *Editor's Note*

The South Atlantic Update is published by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the Council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Anyone wishing to submit information or articles pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, or letters to the editor on a pertinent issue, is invited and encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Kim Iverson, Editor, South Atlantic Update, 4055 Faber Place Dr., Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405, or may be sent via the internet; Email address: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

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## *Council Member Perspective*

### DIVERSITY MUST BE RECOGNIZED



**Council Member  
Tony Iarocci**

The Council is considering a *Limited Access Privilege Program* for the commercial snapper grouper fishery. In June, a precedent was set for the South Atlantic region when the Council approved a series of deep-water *marine protected areas* and is now considering additional *area management* actions through its *Fishery Ecosystem Plan* and *Comprehensive Amendment*. As the Council takes actions to end overfishing for some snapper grouper species and rebuild

overfished stocks, alternatives for *sector allocations* must be addressed.

As all of these management tools are being considered, it is important to remember what fishermen already know – that all fish (and fisheries) are not the same off every coast or state. Fish have different migratory patterns and fishermen from North Carolina to Florida have different fishing techniques. What happens off the coast of Hatteras is not necessarily happening off the coast of Key West. I would argue that the South Atlantic region is the most diverse in the nation when it comes to marine resource management.

We need a plan that allows for this diversity, especially as it applies to our fisheries - not a "one size fits all" approach that fails to deal with local differences. We need to give fishermen the responsibility to take care of fish in their own areas, including the snapper grouper and mackerel fisheries. But we'll need to have all of the players at the table to make this work.

It is time for all regional fishery management councils to look at what's working with their fishermen and explore innovative ways to share that at a national level. The recent establishment of the Council Coordination Committee is a step in the right direction and I look forward to seeing how the Committee facilitates this type of discussion. In addition, I would like to see another national Managing Our Nation's Fisheries Conference to once again bring together all of the regional fishery management councils in a forum that promotes the interchange of information, especially issues regarding the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act, between councils as well as other management agencies, congressional representatives, and our constituents.

At the more local level, the recent meeting of the Council's Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel and Committee in Key West showed how effective having all of the parties involved in management at the table at the same time can be. Lobster management in the Keys involves a lot of entities, including the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, NMFS, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, industry organizations, and individual fishermen. The players were all at the table as an amazing amount of information was exchanged regarding research and management of spiny lobster – at the local, state, federal and even international level.

Collaboration and acknowledgement of diversity can only happen when fishermen, both commercial and recreational, become involved and stay involved in the management process.

Tony Iarocci holds an obligatory Florida seat on the South Atlantic Council. A full-time commercial fisherman from Grassy Key, Florida, Tony chairs the MPA Committee and Spiny Lobster Committee and has been actively involved in the development of MPAs by the Council as well as the Dry Tortugas National Marine Sanctuary.

[Learn more about Council members at www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

## In the News:

### Council Recommends No Exempted Fishery Permit for Longline Fishery

After filing a request for an extended comment period and holding a public comment session during its June meeting in Key West, FL, the Council recommended that NOAA Fisheries Service deny an application to allow longlining for swordfish and other pelagics in restricted areas off the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia and the east coast of Florida.

The Blue Water Fishermen's Association submitted a proposal for an Exempted Fishery Permit (EFP) to allow approximately 13 longline fishing vessels to collect fisheries data in federal waters of the Charleston Bump and east Florida coast that have been closed to longlining since 2001. Council members heard from representatives from the longline fishing community, recreational fishermen, fishing organizations, environmental groups, and concerned citizens during the comment session.

Council members had concerns about the proposed EFP, including the overall magnitude of the request. The permits,

reviewed by the Council before consideration by NOAA Fisheries, are generally issued for small scale collection of marine species by state agencies, aquariums, etc. "I am troubled by the number of vessels in this request...13 vessels is a fishing fleet," said Council member Susan Shipman. "I understand the need to keep the quota share. I think this is a legitimate need, but this is not the way to address it." Council members also questioned the ability to provide 100% observer coverage for vessels as stated in the EFP and expressed concerns about opening the areas known to be nursery areas for juvenile swordfish.

The Council submitted a letter June 19, 2007 to the Highly Migratory Species Division of NOAA Fisheries Service recommending that they deny the Blue Water Fishermen's EFP request. A decision is expected in early August and will be announced by NOAA Fisheries' Highly Migratory Species Division.

Visit: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/)

### Control Date Set for the For-Hire Sector

A control date of **March 8, 2007** has been approved by the Council for the **Snapper Grouper For-Hire fishery** in the South Atlantic region. The for-hire sector includes charter and headboat operations. A control date may be used by a fishery management council or by NOAA Fisheries Service in establishing eligibility criteria for determining levels of future access to fisheries, or sectors of fisheries. Control date notices are used to promote awareness of potential eligibility criteria for future access and are intended to discourage speculative entry into a fishery.

For additional information regarding permits, visit <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/permits.htm> or contact the NOAA Fisheries SERO permits office at 727/824-5326.



## Secretary of Commerce Announces Council Appointees



Tom Swatzel

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez announced appointments to the eight regional fishery management councils in June. Two appointments were announced for the South Atlantic

Fishery Management Council. Each year on behalf of the secretary, the director of NOAA Fisheries Service solicits nominations from the governors of fishing states, and oversees the annual appointment process. The secretary selects council members from the list of nominees provided by the governors. Council members will serve three-year terms and may be reappointed to serve up to three consecutive terms.

**Tom Swatzel**, a deep sea fishing charter operator from Murrells Inlet, South Carolina has been appointed to an obligatory South Carolina seat effective August 10, 2007. As president of Capt. Dick's Marina, he has overseen the operations of a fleet of offshore charter fishing vessels since 1985. Tom served on the council's Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel from 1998-2001, and currently serves on the NMFS Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey Constituent

Review Panel and the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program For-Hire Subcommittee.

"I'm humbled and honored to have been nominated by Gov. Sanford and entrusted with this position of responsibility by the Secretary of Commerce," Swatzel said. "My goal on behalf of the people of South Carolina will be to protect our coastal fishing industry jobs and tourism dollars by conserving this valuable resource while preserving the average family's access to recreational fishing opportunities, now and for future generations."

**Rita Merritt** of Wrightsville Beach, N.C. has been appointed to serve a second term in her seat as an Obligatory member from North Carolina.

Rita brings a diverse background to her position on the Council. Rita has been a business partner with her husband Mike Merritt in their family's commercial fishing business for over 18 years. She played an integral role in the success of the Wrightsville Beach King Mackerel Tournament and served on the



Rita Merritt

Council's King and Spanish Mackerel Advisory Panel before her appointment in 2004. As Chair of the Highly Migratory Species Committee, Rita serves as the Council representative on issues affecting tuna, swordfish and other HMS species. She also Chairs the Limited Access Privilege Program Committee and is actively involved in exploring the use of an LAP Program for the commercial snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic.

### Kerry O'Malley Leaves Council Staff

Council Staff Biologist Kerry O'Malley bid Council members farewell during their June meeting in Key West, FL. Kerry began her career with the Council in 1998 after graduating from the College of Charleston. She worked on various fishery management plans during her time with the Council, but her primary focus in the past few years has been on the development of marine protected areas for the South Atlantic region.

Kerry plans to pursue a career in nursing through the Medical University of SC and spend more time with her husband Mark and their two small children. "I am thankful for the many opportunities my position as Council staff has given me," said Kerry as she received special recognition from the Council.

## Overfishing Occurring for Two Snapper Grouper Species

*Mandates require the Council to reduce harvest within the year*

Fishermen in the South Atlantic who fish for **gag grouper** and **vermilion snapper** will see reductions in what they are allowed to harvest as a result of the latest stock assessments that find both species experiencing overfishing. The news was not good for the two economically important species according to the most recent reports from the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment program. SEDAR stock assessments have been conducted for gag grouper (benchmark) and vermilion snapper (benchmark and update #1). At their June 2007 meeting, the South Atlantic Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)

*“Overfishing” occurs whenever a stock or stock complex is subjected to a rate or level of fishing mortality that jeopardizes the capacity of a stock or stock complex to produce MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield) on a continuing basis. Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions, National Standards Guidelines*

reviewed and approved the two assessments.

The SSC's approval of the stock assessments started the clock for the Council to take action to end the overfishing, prompting the develop-

ment of Amendment 16 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan to reduce harvest for both species. The SSC determined that in order to fish at the Council's Optimum Yield (OY), a reduction of 61% is needed for vermilion snapper. Substantial reductions in harvest are also anticipated for gag grouper in order to end overfishing.

According to a letter distributed to the Council from Dr. Roy Crabtree, Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service, “the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires the Council to prepare a plan amendment or proposed regulations to end overfishing within one year of this notification”. The letter is dated June 12, 2007.

“These reductions are definitely going to have social and economic impacts,” said Dr. Brian Chevront, Socioeconomics Program Manager representing the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries during the June Council meeting. “In North Carolina, vermilion snapper, gag, and black sea bass are the big three for the commercial snapper grouper fishery. There will be some fishermen who will go out of business,” explained Dr. Chevront. “Whether there will be fishermen to take their place, no one knows. These reductions also negatively impact recreational fishermen as well, including the charter and headboat industries.”

Current regulations for both species include size limits and recreational bag limits. In addition, there is a seasonal closure for the commercial gag grouper fishery and a commercial quota for the vermilion snapper (see sidebar). The Council will consider modifying these measures and potential new measures (closed seasons, recreational boat limits, commercial trip limits, etc.) to achieve the necessary reductions. **A series of public scoping meetings will be held in September (see schedule on next page).** The public is encouraged to comment and provide suggestions during the scoping process. A copy of the scoping document will be posted on the Council's web site. Written comments should be emailed to SGAm16Scoping@safmc.net or mailed to the Council office. **All comments must be received in the Council office by 5 p.m. on September 17, 2007.**

### Gag

(*Mycteroperca microlepis*)

#### Life History

Gag are the most widely distributed grouper in the region, with adults present from North Carolina to Brazil over low- and high-profile hard bottom in waters 60-500 feet deep. Young gag inhabit estuaries from Massachusetts to Cape Canaveral. Spawning takes place January through March.

Gag are “protogynous hermaphrodites” which means they begin life as female, however after a few years of spawning, some gag groupers change sex, becoming males. Gag may live for 26 years, grow to be 58” in length, and weigh up to 81 pounds. 50% of the females are mature at 24” total length and age 3. Most gag greater than 48” total length are males. Gag often congregate around rocky ledges and swim in small groups, preying on sardines, porgies, snappers, grunts, crabs, shrimp and squid.

Gag grouper are often confused with black grouper. One distinguishing characteristic is based on the color of the fin margins. The caudal (tail) and anal fin of the gag grouper has white margins while the black grouper does not.

#### Current Regulations

Commercial: 24” size limit; March and April – no harvest above bag limit and no sale; vessels with longlines may only possess deepwater species; limited entry program with 2 for 1 permit provision (fishermen must purchase 2 existing permits to qualify for 1 new permit).  
Recreational Regulations: 24” size limit; within 5 grouper aggregate bag limit only 2 may be gag or black grouper; March and April – no sale.



#### Landings in Pounds (Gutted Weight)

##### Average for 2004-06

Commercial: 562,787 pounds

Recreational: 541,194 pounds

Total = 1,103,981 pounds

##### Projected 2008 Annual

Catch Limit = 694,000 pounds

### Vermilion Snapper

(*Rhomboplites aurorubens*)

#### Life History

Vermilion snapper occur in the Western Atlantic, from North Carolina to Rio de Janeiro, and are most abundant off the southeastern U.S. They are demersal, commonly found over rock, gravel, or sand bottoms near the edge of the continental and island shelves, most commonly at depths less than 225 feet. Vermilion snapper spawn in schools from April through late September. Eggs and larvae are pelagic.

Vermilion snapper are gonochorists, meaning they remain separate sexes throughout life. All vermilion snapper are mature at 2 years of age and 7.9” total length. They prey on fishes, shrimps, crabs, and other bottom invertebrates.

#### Current Regulations

Commercial: 12” size limit; annual quota = 1,100,000 pounds; vessels with longlines may only possess deepwater species; limited entry program with 2 for 1 permit provision.  
Recreational Regulations: 12” size limit; 10 vermilion snapper bag limit.



#### Landings in Pounds (Whole Weight)

##### Average for 2004-06

Commercial: 1,018,883 pounds

Recreational: 608,369 pounds

Total = 1,627,252 pounds

##### Projected 2008 Annual

Catch Limit = 628,459 pounds

## Public Scoping Meeting Schedule for Amendment 16

(gag grouper and vermilion snapper reductions)

All meetings begin at 6:00 PM

### September 4

Hilton Riverside  
301 N. Water Street  
Wilmington, NC

### September 4

Sombrero Cay Clubs  
19 Sombrero Blvd.  
Marathon, FL

### September 5

Sheraton Atlantic Beach  
2717 W. Ft. Macon Rd.  
Atlantic Beach, NC

### September 6

Hampton Inn Daytona Speedway  
1715 W. Int. Speedway Blvd.  
Daytona Beach, FL

### September 10

Holiday Inn Airport  
5264 International Blvd.  
Charleston, SC

### September 17

Avista Resort  
300 N. Ocean Blvd.  
N. Myrtle Beach, SC

Written comments should be emailed to [SGAm16Scoping@safmc.net](mailto:SGAm16Scoping@safmc.net) or mailed to the Council office. All comments must be received in the Council office by 5 p.m. on **September 17, 2007**.

## SSC to Set Fishing Levels

NOAA Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in the process of developing guidance setting annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) as required in the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act of 2006. From mid-February until mid-April of this year, NMFS took public comment on preparation of guidance on ACLs and AMs for use by the regional fishery management councils and NMFS. During the scoping period, NMFS received comments from 2,690 individuals and organizations. Read more at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007/index.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007/index.html)

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee has requested an Ad-Hoc meeting of the Committee be held before their December meeting in order to develop recommendations for ACLs using gag grouper as a case study. The Ad-Hoc Committee will present their recommendations to the full SSC during their December meeting. The objective is to provide the Council with a recommendation on Annual Catch Limits. The SSC will meet again December 2-4 in conjunction with the December 3-7, 2007 Council meeting in Atlantic Beach, NC.

## Limited Access Privilege Program Workgroup Receives Input from Gulf Snapper Grouper Fishermen



Members of the Council's Limited Access Privilege (LAP) Program Exploratory Workgroup listened intently during their June meeting as commercial fishermen and NMFS Law Enforcement personnel from the Gulf of Mexico shared their experience in developing an IFQ (Individual Fishing Quota) for the Gulf of Mexico grouper fishery through a Gulf Council Advisory Panel. It was

the first time that the LAP Program Workgroup, established by the Council in March 2007 to explore the possibility of creating such a program in the commercial snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic region, had heard directly from fishermen involved in such a program.

In January of this year, commercial red snapper fishermen in the Gulf began fishing under an Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) system. The system allocates quota shares to each fisherman based on historical landings and allows the shares to be transferred. Overall, the Gulf fishermen who attended the June meeting voiced positive results thus far and anticipated long-term gains for their fishery as red snapper stocks rebuild.

There were many questions for the Gulf fishermen and a ready exchange of information and ideas during this second meeting of the Workgroup. Beginning with their initial meeting in April, Workgroup members have been presented with a large amount of background information regarding LAP programs as they have been applied in other fisheries, including those in New Zealand, British Columbia, and Alaska. Presentations and other background information have included the possible benefits and drawbacks of such programs. Particular focus has been paid to development of the multispecies Gulf Grouper IFQ that is currently underway and is being considered by the Gulf Council. In addition, Workgroup members have received statistical data regarding South Atlantic fisheries and detailed information specific to the snapper grouper fishery.

"The dynamics of this workgroup is great," said Workgroup Chairman Ben Hartig in a report to the Council's LAP Program Committee. "The fishermen were more excited about seeing an

example of a program that they can relate to by having the Gulf fishermen participate in the workgroup. There was good discussion." At the request of the Workgroup, the Council appointed Bruce Irwin of Marathon, Florida, to represent the interest of fishermen in the Florida Keys. He is a full-time commercial fisherman.

Part of the Workgroup's responsibilities includes the development of a Working Document for Council consideration. When finalized, the Working Document will include recommendations for a possible LAP Program for the South Atlantic commercial snapper grouper fishery, as well as their perspective on whether a LAP would benefit the fishery. The Working Document includes possible benefits and drawbacks identified by the LAP Workgroup and various options the Workgroup would like to see considered by the Council in designing an LAP. The Working Document is updated after each Workgroup meeting and is available through the Council's web site or by contacting the Council office.

"We're going to get to a template for a limited access privilege program for the Council," said Ben Hartig. "Whether or not this area and the fishermen are ready for it remains to be seen."

### Upcoming LAPP Workgroup Meetings

**SEPTEMBER 18 -19** (in conjunction with SAFMC meeting)  
Avista Resort  
300 N. Ocean Boulevard  
North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582

**OCTOBER 16 - 17**  
5265 International Blvd.  
Hilton Garden Inn  
North Charleston, SC 29418

**DECEMBER 5 - 6** (in conjunction with SAFMC meeting)  
Sheraton Atlantic Beach  
2717 W. Ft. Macon Road

Members of the public are invited to attend these meetings.

Visit [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) for additional information regarding the LAP Program Workgroup. For specific questions about LAP Programs, contact Kate Quigley, Staff Economist at [kate.quigley@safmc.net](mailto:kate.quigley@safmc.net) or by calling the Council office at 843/571-4366 or toll free 866/SAFMC-10.

# Deepwater Marine Protected Areas Proposed for the South Atlantic Region

## Snowy Grouper Wreck MPA

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 33°25'N, 77°4.75'W; northeast corner at 33°34.75'N, 76°51.3'W; southwest corner at 33°15.75'N, 77°W; and the southeast corner at 33°25.5'N, 76°46.5'W.

**Location:** 55 nautical miles southeast of Southport, NC  
**Size:** 15 by 10 nautical miles.  
**Description:** depths range from 492 ft to 984 ft. deep, with a shallow area ranging from 197 ft. to 328 ft. The area includes a wreck site known to have once held spawning aggregations of snowy grouper. After discovery of wreck in 1990's, the area was quickly fished down. Possible location of other smaller wrecks. Area popular location for fishermen trolling for tuna, marlin, dolphin and wahoo.

## Northern South Carolina MPA

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 32°53.5'N, 78°16.75'W; the northeast corner at 32°53.5'N, 78°4.75'W; the southwest corner at 32°48.5'N, 78°16.75'W; and the southeast corner at 32°48.5'N, 78°4.75'W.

**Location:** 54 nautical miles from Murrells Inlet, SC  
**Size:** 10 X 5 nautical miles  
**Description:** Area of low relief ranging in depths from 164 to 591 ft. deep. Fishermen refer to the area as "smurfville" because it holds many small vermilion snapper. The area also holds deepwater species such as snowy grouper and speckled hind as well as other snapper grouper species such as red porgy, triggerfish, and gag.

"Marine protected areas are an essential part of the plan to rebuild snapper and grouper populations. Deepwater species are steadily declining throughout the South Atlantic region and need special consideration. The Council's recent vote for place-based management is a very positive step in this direction, and the council should be congratulated for its forward thinking."

Dan Whittle, Director, Southeast Oceans Program, Environmental Defense

## Edisto MPA

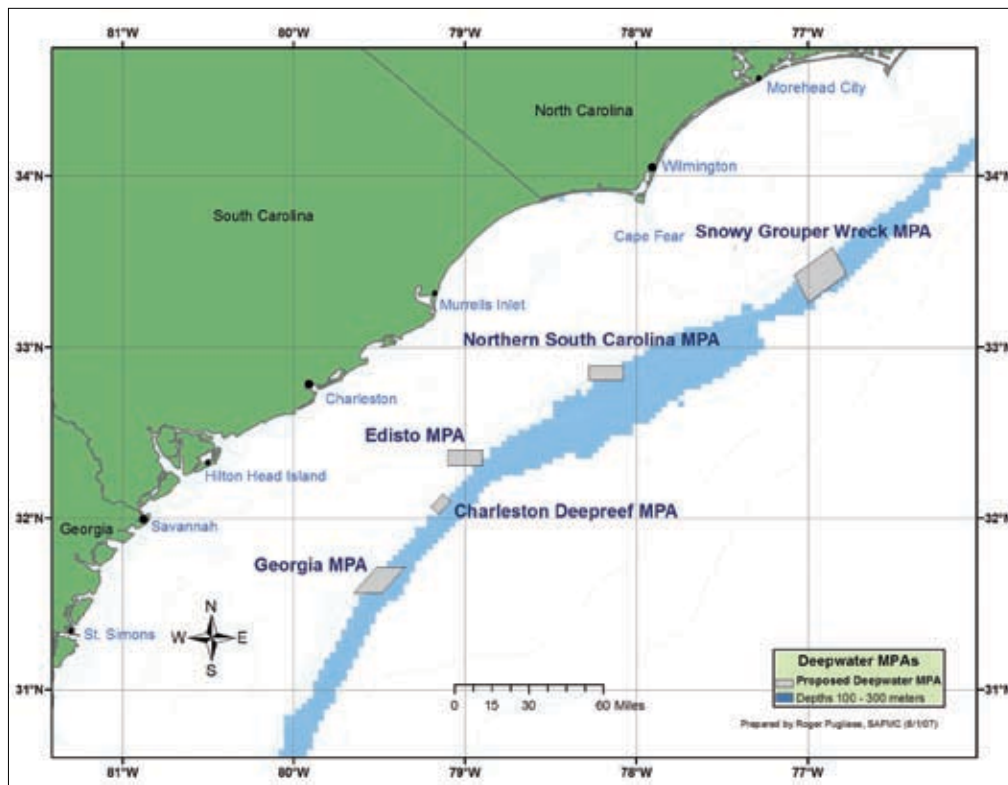
**Coordinates:** The northwest corner at 32°24'N, 79°6'W; the northeast corner at 32°24'N, 78°54'W; the southwest corner at 32°18.5'N, 79°6'W; and the southeast corner at 32°18.5'N, 78°54'W.  
**Location:** 45 nautical miles southeast of Charleston, SC harbor.  
**Size:** 10 X 5 nautical miles

**Description:** depths range from 262 ft. – 459 ft. with shallower areas from 148 ft. to 262 ft. Area is heavily fished and includes shelf-edge habitat. Includes both mid-shelf and deepwater species, including vermilion snapper, red porgy and juvenile snowy grouper.

### Actions Proposed for Deepwater MPAs

- Fishing for snapper grouper species prohibited;
- Transit provision to allow fishermen to cross areas with snapper grouper onboard with gear stowed;
- Close areas to shark longline fishing.

**Note:** While snapper grouper fishing is prohibited, trolling for pelagic species such as tuna, dolphin, and mackerel will be allowed within the MPAs.



## Charleston Deep Artificial Reef MPA

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 32°4' N, 79°12'W; the northeast corner at 32°8.5'N, 79°7.75'W; the southwest corner at 32°1.5'N, 79°9.3'W; and the southeast corner at 32°6'N, 79°5'W.

**Location:** 50 nautical miles southeast of Charleston Harbor, SC.  
**Size:** 3.5 X 6 nautical miles

**Description:** This area is proposed as an experimental artificial reef as a result of public comment and support for creating artificial reef areas. The area ranges in depth from 328 ft. – 492 ft. There is a lack of hard bottom in the area. Any biological benefits to deepwater species would accrue after artificial reef material (such as sunken ships, tanks, or highway materials) was added to improve habitat and attract fish.

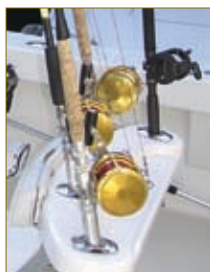
## Georgia MPA (Tilefish MPA)

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 31°43'N, 79°31'W; the northeast corner at 31°43'N, 79°21'W; the southwest corner at 31°34'N, 79°39'W; and the southeast corner at 31°34'N, 79°29'W.

**Location:** 69 nautical miles southeast of the mouth of Wassaw Sound, GA

**Size:** 10 X 10 nautical miles

**Description:** depths range from 295 ft. – 984 ft. Golden tilefish are often caught within the area, although most fishing is for pelagic species such as tuna and dolphin. The area lies east of an area known as the "Triple Ledge", an important area for commercial fishermen.



"The East Hump deepwater MPA in Monroe County is the end result of cooperative effort by the Council, commercial, charter, recreational, and conservation interestes working together toward a common goal, and one that all of us are extremely proud of." Capt. Bill Kelly, MPA Point Man for the Islamorada Charter Boat Association

### North Florida MPA (Jacksonville/St. Augustine Ridge MPA)

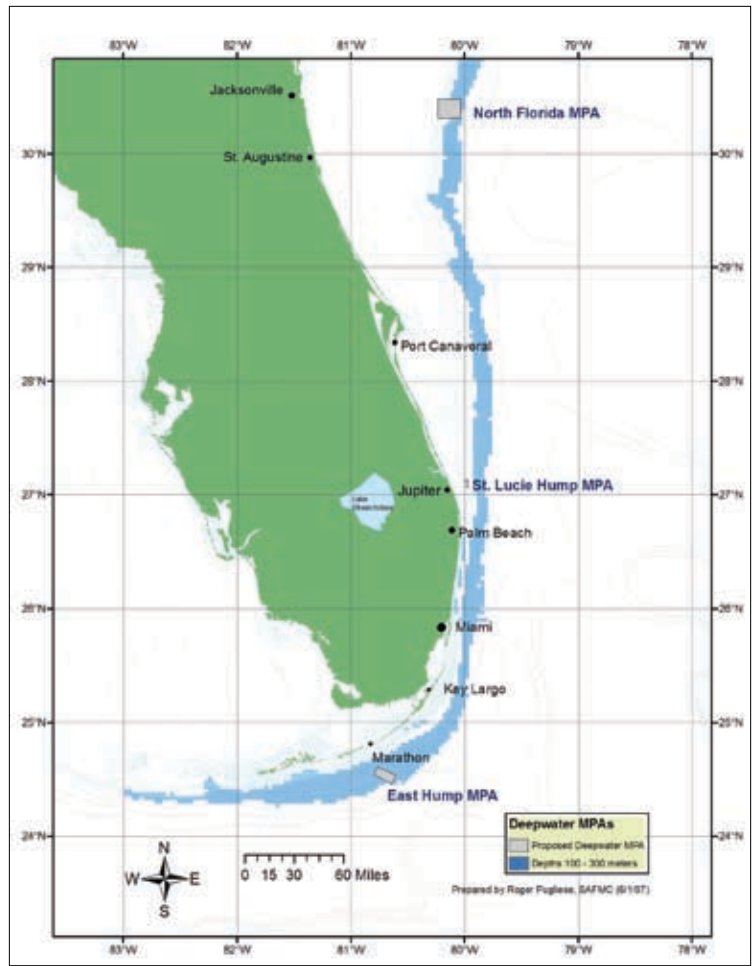
**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 30°29'N, 80°14'W; the northeast corner at 30°29'N, 80°2'W; the southwest corner at 30°19'N, 80°14'W; and the southeast corner at 30°19'N, 80°2'W.  
**Location:** 60 nautical miles off the mouth of the St. John's River near Jacksonville, FL  
**Size:** 10 X 10 nautical miles  
**Description:** depths range from 197 ft. – 656 ft. with a deeper area to 1,247 ft. Area includes shelf-edge reef. Snowy grouper, speckled hind have been sampled from area. May also hold golden tilefish in mud habitat.

### St. Lucie Hump MPA

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 27°8'N, 80°W; the northeast corner at 27°8'N, 79°58'W; the southwest corner at 27°4'N, 80°W; and the southeast corner at 27°4'N, 79°58'W.  
**Location:** 9 nautical miles southeast of St. Lucie Inlet, FL  
**Size:** 4 X 2 nautical miles  
**Description:** depths range from 216 ft. – 234 ft. A habitat-rich area with speckled hind, juvenile snowy grouper, Warsaw grouper and mid-shelf species including sea bass and red porgy. Area is heavily targeted by fishermen fishing for pelagics.

### East Hump MPA

**Coordinates:** Northwest corner at 24°36.5'N, 80°45.5'W; the northeast corner at 24°32'N, 80°36'W; the southwest corner at 24°32.5'N, 80°48'W; and the southeast corner at 24°27.5'N, 80°38.5'W.  
**Location:** 13 nautical miles southeast of Long Key, FL  
**Size:** 5 X 10 nautical miles  
**Description:** depths range from 636 ft. – 971 ft., with tops of the "humps" 509 ft. – 541 ft. A very habitat rich area located near the Islamorada Hump and proposed by the Islamorada Charterboat Association. Snowy grouper, golden tilefish and Warsaw grouper plus other species are found in the area.



#### (Amendment 14 and MPAs continued from page 1)

in 1990 as the Council's Snapper Grouper Plan Development Team offered the approach as "the only viable option for maintaining optimum size, age, and genetic structure of slow-growing, long-lived species over the long-term". Public scoping meetings held in 1992 resulted in the creation of a Scientific Review Panel to review the concept. In 1994, the Council created the 92 square-mile *Oculina* Experimental Closed Area off the east coast of Florida and prohibited fishing for snapper grouper species.

By 1995, the Scientific Review Panel had concluded that properly designed marine reserves in combination with other management measures were an effective tool. Following recommendations from the Review Panel, the Council began a deliberative process to include stakeholders and constituents in identifying possible marine reserves. In 1998 the Council formed a Marine Reserves Advisory Panel and Committee (the term was later changed to Marine Protected Area) and by 2000, laid out a deliberative process involving constituents to determine if MPAs should be used as a management tool in the South Atlantic region. The process has included informational meetings, workshops, public scoping meetings, and a series of public hearings that culminated with the final vote.

#### Timing

Before approving Amendment 14, the Council had a lengthy discussion regarding the inclusion of the action to prohibit shark longlines in the amendment. Council member and Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service, Dr. Roy

Crabtree urged the Council to remove the longline prohibition from Amendment 14 and allow it to be addressed through NOAA Fisheries' Highly Migratory Species Division. The HMS Division is currently including alternatives for longline closures in the MPAs as part of Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan. The amendment addresses overfishing for several shark species and includes reductions in the fishery.

Dr. Crabtree noted jurisdictional concerns (the Council does not manage sharks) and cautioned that including the shark longline prohibition in Amendment 14 would "significantly" delay the Secretarial review process until the HMS Division completed their process.

"It seems to me that as a Council we want to make it clear what we want to do with regard to these MPAs - and that includes closing them to bottom longline gear," countered Council member Mark Robson. "The jurisdictional issue is separate from that, to a degree, and that's going to have to be sorted out. Somehow by modifying or taking it out of the amendment, we lose that position." After questioning Dr. Crabtree and discussing options, the Council agreed to leave the action to prohibit shark longlines in Amendment 14. Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan was submitted to Dr. Crabtree's office on July 18, 2007 for formal review and approval by the Secretary of Commerce. It is unknown at this time how long the review process will take and when the MPAs and other actions may be in place.

## Development of Fishery Ecosystem Plan on Schedule

Council narrows focus of actions included in the first Comprehensive Amendment

### Actions in the FEP Comprehensive Amendment:

- Update existing Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) information to address the EFH Final Rule;
- Designate four new deepwater Coral HAPCs to protect deepwater coral communities;
- Designate "Allowable Trawl Areas" to minimize the impact of deepwater trawls on bottom habitat.

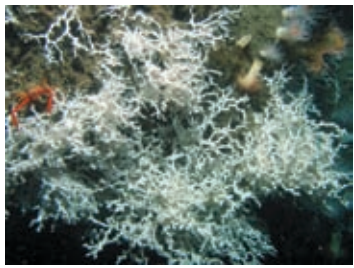


Photo: Steve Ross, et.al

Over the last decade, ecosystem-based management has slowly become the new standard for the management of U.S. fishery resources. Ecosystem-based management seeks to manage in such a way as to maintain the functional structure of the entire system, including humans and their activities. With this goal in mind, and based on its long-term habitat conservation ethic, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council formally initiated a process moving the region towards an ecosystem-based approach to the management of fisheries in 2002. The

Council began by adopting recommendations outlined in the 1999 report to Congress by the Ecosystems Principles Advisory Panel.

The area between Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and the Florida Keys has been determined to constitute a Large Marine Ecosystem (LME). Large Marine Ecosystems are regions of ocean space from river basins and estuaries to the seaward margins of continental shelves and the outer boundaries of the major current systems. They exhibit distinct bathymetry, hydrography, productivity and trophically-dependent populations. Thus, the area of the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction comprises essentially a single ecosystem.

In 1998, the South Atlantic Council's Habitat Plan and Comprehensive Essential Fish Habitat Amendment were approved. The Habitat Plan was developed by a large group of regional experts including resource managers, researchers and Council Advisory Panel members. The Habitat Plan is a

comprehensive description of habitats in the South Atlantic supporting fishery resources within the Council's jurisdiction as well as threats to those habitats from both fishing and non-fishing activities. The Comprehensive EFH Amendment established EFH and HAPC designations for all of the Council's Fishery Management Plans. Following this model and using the Habitat Plan as a cornerstone, the South Atlantic Council is now developing a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) and Comprehensive Amendment. The FEP represents a compilation of all pertinent information about the South Atlantic LME. The FEP will serve as the source document to the Comprehensive Amendment which will comprise the various regulatory actions.

To accomplish this enormous task, the South Atlantic Council has established Writing Teams comprised of regional experts to synthesize and update information contained in the FEP. The FEP is intended to be a "living document" since it will be updated every 5 years. The Comprehensive Amendment will contain actions to amend Council FMPs as necessary and it is anticipated that an amendment will be done once a year. Initially, three actions will be included in the Comprehensive Amendment: 1) Updating existing EFH and HAPC information to address the EFH Final Rule, 2) designating four new deepwater Coral HAPCs to protect deepwater coral communities and 3) designating an "Allowable Trawl Area" to minimize impact of deepwater trawls on bottom habitat. Members of the Council's advisory panels will continue to be involved in the development of the FEP Comprehensive Amendment, especially those directly involved with deepwater fisheries.

"Oceana is pleased that the South Atlantic council is taking action this year to establish the nation's first comprehensive and region-wide fishery ecosystem plan," said David Allison, director of Oceana's Campaign to Stop Destructive Trawling. "The council recognized the need for ecosystem planning long ago and is a leader in supporting the letter and spirit of the recommendations of the National Ocean Commission and the Pew Ocean Commission."

The Council will review the FEP Comprehensive Amendment during its September 17-21, 2007 meeting in N. Myrtle Beach. Both the FEP and Comprehensive Amendment are scheduled for completion in 2008.

### Council's Aquaculture Policy Approved

Relying primarily on the expertise of members of its Habitat Advisory Panel, the Council approved a policy statement on marine aquaculture during its June 2007 meeting to address potential impacts associated with marine aquaculture on essential fish habitat (EFH).

In approving this policy, the Council took a proactive approach in addressing impacts to habitat since current laws, regulations, and policies differ for offshore aquaculture, and for aquaculture activities in nearshore and inshore waters managed by the various states. It is the Council's intent that the recommendations presented in the approved policy be applied to aquaculture facilities in reasonable proximity to EFH and EFH-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, however managed.

The approved policy is now available on the Council's website at

<http://www.safmc.net/EcosystemManagement/HabitatProtection/HabitatPolicies/tabid/245/Default.aspx>



Photo: NOAA Fisheries Service

## Options Paper Developed to Address Rock Shrimp Permit Issues



Fishermen who fish for rock shrimp in the South Atlantic region are required to have a rock shrimp permit. Beginning in 2003, those fishermen who fish off the east coast of Florida and Georgia are also required to have a limited access

permit and meet landings requirements between 2004 -2007 in order to keep those permits. As that period comes to an end this year, some rock shrimp fishermen may lose their limited access permits for not having met those requirements.

Members of the Rock Shrimp Advisory Panel (recently renamed the Deepwater Shrimp AP to better reflect the inclusion of the royal red shrimp fishery) met in May of this year to discuss options to address the loss of permits. According to AP members, the rock shrimp fishery has changed substantially since the limited access permits were first required. The fleet dynamics have changed due to economic factors including increased fuel prices and operating expenses, imported shrimp products, and conditions in the Gulf fishery. In addition, weather – including multiple hurricanes and tropical depressions over the past few years have influenced the number of vessels in the fleet.

At the request of the Advisory Panel, the Council approved moving forward with a list of options to consider in Amendment 7 to the Shrimp FMP. These options will (1) address the 15,000 pound landings requirement; (2) permits that may have been lost due to not meeting the 15,000 pound requirement; and (3) permits lost through failure to renew the limited entry permit. The Amendment is currently scheduled for approval for public hearings during the Council's December 2007 meeting in Atlantic Beach, NC.

## Fishermen, Managers, and Enforcement Agents Share Spiny Lobster Information



A joint meeting of the Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel and Committee resulted in a better understanding of issues affecting the spiny lobster fishery from agencies, both state and federal, involved in their management and protection. Fishermen learned about current research and

law enforcement efforts in the fishery as the meeting provided for an open exchange of information and questions.

The Committee and AP members received updates from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Resources Institute on the status of spiny lobster in Florida and were provided an update on recommendations from the state lobster advisory board. NMFS Law Enforcement personnel reviewed enforcement efforts to prevent the importation of undersized spiny lobster and members were presented scientific support for a size limit to prevent imports of short lobsters.

The AP provided recommendations on allocations, annual catch limits, tailing permits, and prohibiting the importation of undersized lobsters. Following their recommendations, the Council approved a motion to move forward with a plan amendment to implement a size limit for imported spiny lobsters, with the Caribbean Council taking the administrative lead to implement the amendment.

## Mackerel Fishermen Get Reprieve from Reductions in Quota

*Council decides to delay action until 2008 stock assessment*

Actions in an amendment that would have lowered the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Atlantic group king mackerel and Spanish mackerel have been put on hold – at least for now. The Council reached its decision after reviewing public comment received during 10 public hearings, written comments, and recommendations from the Mackerel Advisory Panel, Committee, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee. There was a general consensus to wait until the results of the 2008 Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) 16 benchmark stock assessments are available before taking further actions. Additionally, the Council noted the need to address differential impacts to North Carolina and other states north of the Florida boundary that may occur with reductions in the TAC.

Amendment 18 to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagics in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic contained measures to lower the annual TAC for king mackerel from 10.0 million pounds to 7.1 million pounds, and for Spanish mackerel from 7.04 million pounds to 6.7 million pounds. The amendment also included an action to adjust the trip limit start date for Atlantic Spanish mackerel. With the removal of actions to reduce the TAC from Amendment 18, the adjustment to the trip limit start date for Atlantic Spanish mackerel will be expedited through a regulatory amendment.

While both the commercial and recreational mackerel stocks remain viable, the Council was considering a precautionary approach to reduce the TAC for each fishery based on updates from earlier assessments. The Council is also concerned about possible shifts to the commercial king mackerel fishery as restrictions in other fisheries increase, especially for those involved in the snapper grouper fishery. However, fishermen voiced their concerns that the earlier assessments were outdated and did not accurately reflect the current status of the king or Spanish mackerel fishery. During public hearings, fishermen urged the Council to wait until the 2008 SEDAR stock assessment before making any changes.

The removal of the TAC reductions from Amendment 18 was not done without reservation. Council Chairman George Geiger, who also serves as Chairman of the Mackerel Committee, cautioned that removal of the TAC reductions now does not mean that future reductions may not be necessary. “My inclination is to move forward with the best available science we have at this time,” said Chairman Geiger during discussions. “I am not comfortable doing this, but in face of the other information we’ve accumulated, I think we need to defer for now. However, it is important for the fishermen to understand that if we delay the cuts now, they could be forthcoming in the future.”



## Spanish Mackerel Fishing with Ben Hartig

Commercial fishing trip sheds light on day boat techniques in South Florida  
(Part II)

The last issue of the *South Atlantic Update* featured a story of day boat fishing for Spanish mackerel with Ben Hartig, a full-time commercial fisherman and Chairman of the Council's King and Spanish Mackerel Advisory Panel. The story began with the early morning departure out of St. Lucie Inlet in southeastern Florida. After successfully catching fish using hook and line, the second part of our story begins with an afternoon demonstration of cast net techniques and ends back at the docks in Port Solerno late that evening...

In addition to fishing hook and line, commercial mackerel fishermen use cast nets to bring Spanish mackerel to the boat. Earlier in the day several recreational and commercial fishermen had joined us in the area about a quarter of a mile offshore of the inlet. Of the 8 or so commercial boats, several were using cast nets. Ben offered to demonstrate how the nets are used.



Mackerel cast net boats

There is skill involved in using the large cast nets. Currently, state law permits the use of cast nets with a radius of up to 14'. Mesh size varies from 3 to 4 1/4 inches. Ben gathered the net from a hold in the bow, layering it deliberately over his arm. With a line clenched between his teeth, the net was slung over the area where the mackerel schooled near the boat. After waiting for the net to sink, within the minute

Using the cast net

the net was hauled back into the boat. On

the front deck, the two fishermen began the task of pulling mackerel from the mesh. It was not an easy task. There were about 25-30 fish caught with each cast.

"I prefer hook and line fishing," said Ben. "We use the nets when the water is turbid or cold." He explained that the nets are necessary to produce the volume of fish needed for market stability.

After a few casts of the net, Ben decided to go back to using the rods and reels, trying the larger live bait we'd caught on the reef just after lunch. By late afternoon nearly each cast brought a nice fish to the boat. Ben explained that the mackerel were graded according to weight, with fish less than 2 pounds considered "Medium", 2-3 pounds "Large", and over 3 pounds, "Jumbo". Most of the fish averaged 2-3 pounds, but



Picking fish takes time

there were enough jumbo grade fish to make both fishermen happy. Jumbo grade fish can bring 3 times the price of medium grade on the market.

"Most Spanish mackerel fishermen stop targeting Spanish mackerel after the fish begin migrating north in May," said Ben. Last summer for the first time Ben and several other fishermen targeted and caught commercial quantities of Spanish mackerel in August. "This is the first time in over 40 years on the water I've seen this occur," said Ben. He attributed this to stock increases which cause the fish to expand their range.

It was dark by the time we reached the commercial docks back in Port Solerno, joining other day boat fishermen. Workers were on hand to offload the baskets of mackerel. The fish were graded according to size, weighed, and loaded into large bins, as a worker shoveled ice over each layer of fish. After 14 hours on the water, exhausted and covered in fish slime and tiny shiny scales,

it seemed as if offloading the mackerel would never end (and all I had to do was watch). Ben and Tyler unloaded nearly 1,100 pounds of Spanish mackerel, nearly all caught on hook and line. With the exception of one pinfish, every fish caught that day was a Spanish mackerel.

The large bins full of fish and ice were loaded by forklift

into the back of waiting trucks. The fish were taken north to Inlet Seafood in Ft. Pierce, where they would be packed into 50 lb. boxes to ship to markets in New York, California, and Canada. Because of demand, few would be marketed locally.

"Prices vary due to the amount of fish going to market in any one week," said Ben. "Prices average 40 cents per pound for Medium grade, 60 cents per pound for Large, and 90 cents per pound for Jumbo."

A day that began at sunrise would end for the fishermen around 10:00 p.m. as the last of the fish were offloaded.

"People ask me how I can make a living hook and line fishing for mackerel," said Ben. "This is how. Hard work, determination, and a passion for what you do."

Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, Editor, and grateful observer.

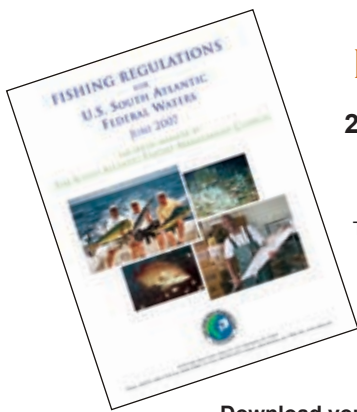


"Jumbo" Spanish mackerel



Ben and Tyler offload their catches of Spanish mackerel while I proudly display mine!





## NOW AVAILABLE

### 2007 Fishing Regulations for U.S. South Atlantic Federal Waters

The updated brochure contains recreational and commercial regulations for species managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, plus information on managed areas and full-color illustrations of commonly caught species of snapper and grouper.

Download your copy at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) or request a hard copy by email at [safmc@safmc.net](mailto:safmc@safmc.net) or call 843/571-4366 (toll free 866/SAFMC-10)

## SAFMC Meeting Dates and Locations 2007 Schedule

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>March 5-9, 2007</b><br>Jekyll Island Club Hotel<br>371 Riverview Drive<br>Jekyll Island, GA 31527<br>800/535-9547 | <b>September 17-21, 2007</b><br>Avista Resort<br>300 N. Ocean Blvd.<br>N. Myrtle Beach, SC 29582<br>800/968-8986 |
|--|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>June 10-15, 2007</b><br>Doubletree Grand Key<br>3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd.<br>Key West, FL 33040<br>800/222-8733 | <b>December 3-7, 2007</b><br>Sheraton Atlantic Beach<br>2717 W. Ft. Macon Rd.<br>Atlantic Beach, NC 28512<br>800/624-8875 |
|--|---|

## South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting



### September 17-21, 2007

Avista Resort

300 N. Ocean Boulevard  
North Myrtle Beach, SC

Phone: 800/968-8986 or 843/249-2521

For a detailed agenda contact the Council office toll free at 1-866 SAFMC-10 or 843/571-4366. The agenda is also available on the Council's web site [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

### DRAFT MEETING AGENDA

|                  |                                   |  |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Monday</b>    | <b>1:00 - 6:00</b>                | <b>Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting</b>                                    |
|                  | <b>-Concurrent Sessions -</b>     |  |
|                  | <b>1:00 - 3:00</b>                | <b>AP Selection Committee Meeting (Closed)</b>                                   |
|                  | <b>3:00 - 4:30</b>                | <b>SOPPs Committee Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>4:30 - 5:30</b>                | <b>Finance Committee Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>6:00 PM - PUBLIC SCOPING -</b> | <b>Snapper Grouper Amendment 16 (gag grouper and vermilion snapper measures)</b> |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>8:00 - 12:00</b>               | <b>Snapper Grouper AP Meeting (continued)</b>                                    |
|                  | <b>1:00 - 6:00</b>                | <b>LAP Exploratory Workgroup Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>-Concurrent Sessions -</b>     |  |
|                  | <b>8:00 - 9:00</b>                | <b>SSC Selection Committee Meeting (Closed)</b>                                  |
|                  | <b>9:00 - 11:00</b>               | <b>I&amp;E Committee Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>11:00 - 12:00</b>              | <b>SEDAR Committee Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>1:30 - 6:00</b>                | <b>Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting</b>   |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>8:00 - 3:00</b>                | <b>LAP Workgroup Meeting (continued)</b>   |
|                  | <b>-Concurrent Sessions -</b>     |  |
|                  | <b>8:00 - 12:00</b>               | <b>Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting (continued)</b>                             |
|                  | <b>1:30 - 4:00</b>                | <b>Mackerel Committee Meeting</b>  |
|                  | <b>4:00 - 6:00</b>                | <b>Shrimp Committee Meeting</b>  |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>8:00 - 12:00</b>               | <b>Ecosystem-based Management Committee Meeting</b>                              |
|                  | <b>1:30 - 3:30</b>                | <b>LAP Program Committee Meeting</b>   |
|                  | <b>4:00 - 6:00</b>                | <b>Council Session</b>   |
| <b>Friday</b>    | <b>8:00 - 12:00</b>               | <b>Council Session</b>   |

### Acronyms

**ABC - Allowable Biological Catch**

**ACCSP - Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program**

**AP - Advisory Panel**

**ASMFC - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

**BRD - Bycatch Reduction Device**

**CPUE - Catch Per Unit Effort**

**EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone**

**EFH - Essential Fish Habitat**

**EFH/HAPC - Essential Fish Habitat/Habitat Area of Particular Concern**

**FMP - Fishery Management Plan**

**HMS - Highly Migratory Species**

**ITQ - Individual Transferable Quota**

**LAP - Limited Access Privilege**

**MSY - Maximum Sustainable Yield**

**MRFSS - Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey**

**NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service**

**OY - Optimum Yield**

**SEDAR - Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review**

**SSC - Scientific & Statistical Committee**

**SFA - Sustainable Fisheries Act**

**TAC - Total Allowable Catch**

**VMS - Vessel Monitoring System**

*Mark your calendar...*

2007

**September 2-6**      *American Fisheries Society 137th Annual Meeting*  
San Francisco, CA    [www.fisheries.org/sf/](http://www.fisheries.org/sf/)

**October 16-17**      *Limited Access Privilege (LAP) Program Workgroup Meeting*  
North Charleston, SC    [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

**October 16-18**      *Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
New Bern, NC    [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)

**October 29-Nov 2**      *Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
Biloxi, MS    [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)



**NOTE: Public Scoping Scheduled for Gag Grouper and Vermilion Snapper**  
Mandated reductions are necessary to end overfishing  
See page 4 for details and scoping meeting schedule.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration

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