

South Atlantic Update



Published for fishermen and others interested in marine resource conservation issues

Summer 2005

Snapper Grouper Fishermen and Managers Dealing with Tough Decisions *Regulatory amendment provides for additional alternatives and public input*

The Council's Snapper Grouper Committee and Advisory Panel wrestled with tough decisions during its joint meeting in Cape Canaveral, Florida in June. Members faced an interim rule measure that, if adopted, would have substantially reduced harvest for four major species in the fishery within a matter of months. Recent stock assessments indicate that overfishing is occurring for snowy grouper, golden tilefish, vermilion snapper, and black sea bass.

Originally, the Council intended to address the updated stock conditions and reduce fishing mortality through Amendment 13B to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, because of the complexity of the Amendment, regulations may not be implemented until 2007. The interim rule measure was proposed by the Council in March 2005 to address the Sustainable Fisheries Act's mandate to end overfishing as quickly as possible. Measures proposed in the interim rule included complete closures for several months for some species.

Fishermen on the advisory panel from Cape Hatteras to the Florida Keys expressed their concerns on the impacts of closures and severe reductions in a fishery that has seen its share of regulations over the past two decades.



The *Thunderstar*, a headboat homeported in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. returns to the dock after a full day fishing trip. Proposed reductions in harvest of snapper grouper species will impact recreational, commercial, and charter/headboat fishermen.

"The industry is on the brink right now. We can't keep taking hits like this...my village had eight fish houses twelve years ago and it's down to three. Two of those are going to go under with this" said Jeff Oden, AP member and commercial fisherman from Hatteras, N.C. During a public comment period, commercial fishermen, charter captains, and business operators came from as far away as Charleston, S.C. to provide input. "Vermilion snapper are one of our staple fish and we're not seeing a problem now," said Allen Leary, Captain of the *Thunderstar*, a headboat out of Mt. Pleasant, S.C. "13B may hit us hard, but this interim rule will kill us." (Continued page 4)



Control Date Set For Commercial Snapper Grouper Fishery

The Council will establish a control date for the commercial snapper grouper fishery upon publication in the Federal Register. A control date puts fishermen on notice that landings after that date may or

may not be used for future management measures. It is expected that the Federal Register Notice will be published within the next month.

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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, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699, or may be sent via the internet; Email address: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

A publication of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA05NMF4410004.

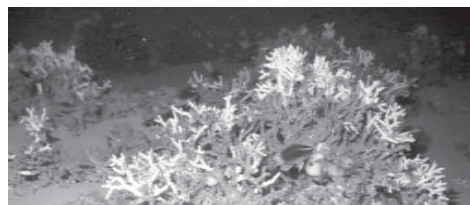


**Fishery Ecosystem-based Management
*The Silver Bullet?***

The Council recently approved a comprehensive outline for the development of its Fishery Ecosystem Plan. Similar to the Council's current Habitat Plan for the South Atlantic Region, the outline will provide the framework on which the entire FEP will be developed. The process involves additional workshops, writing teams, and periodic reviews by various advisory panels, committees, the Council, and the public. Dr. Doug Rader, Senior Scientist with Environmental Defense addressed the Council in June during a public comment period regarding the development of the FEP. He provided the following summary of his comments.

1) The SAFMC should be applauded as a national model for working hard to make ecosystem-based management real. EBM is everyone's silver bullet, yet few seem to have any real idea about how to use it. The SAFMC has an unprecedented opportunity to build on the great work done over the past decade, to put in place one of the only working EBM programs in the world. The Council's stated intent of developing and implementing a management framework that both meets ecosystem goals and optimizes human uses and values for that system is a bold vision for Southeast oceans.

2) The biggest challenge in achieving the potential for the FEP will be having the basic science right and information adequate to do that job right. That means understanding basic population dynamics of species involved, understanding the underlying food webs and energy flow patterns, understanding the habitat relationships in the region (for all life history stages), and understanding large-scale movement patterns of the animals. It also means understanding human use patterns, and responses by people to both regulatory and non-regulatory drivers in the system — including those not under direct Council management. Resources must be raised to meet this need, including investments in fully implementing ACCSP (Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program) and other research and monitoring priorities identified by the Council and its committees and advisory panels, including the Oculina Bank management plan. More ecologists need to be brought into the process, perhaps through the Scientific and Statistical Committee. *(Continued page 10)*



IN THE NEWS:

3rd Annual Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals - Council to be Represented

The Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science in Miami, FL will be the site of the 3rd annual Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals from **November 28-December 2, 2005.**

The Council's involvement in deep-sea coral research and management will be represented during an oral presentation focusing on the Council's ecosystem-based approach to management. A poster has also been accepted that highlights outreach efforts for the Oculina Bank protected area.

Understanding the ecosystem role, function, and value of deep-sea corals and associated fauna has become a priority topic for many national governments and international resource management bodies. This international symposium will facilitate global exchange of current scientific knowledge of deep-sea corals and discussion of possible statutory means available to conserve and protect deep-sea habitat.

For more information on the Deep-Sea Coral Symposium, visit <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/coral>.

Southeast Bycatch Workshop Scheduled

The public is invited to attend a workshop focusing on bycatch issues in the Southeastern U.S. and Caribbean at the Hilton, St. Petersburg, FL, November 8-10, 2005. The goal of the workshop is to provide a better understanding of bycatch issues, identify potential solutions that can reduce bycatch, and enhance ability to measure bycatch.

The three-day workshop will include a series of presentations to provide an overview on regional bycatch issues and potential solutions, work groups and final reports.

To register for the workshop or for more information, contact Mark Godcharles, SERO Outreach Coordinator, mark.godcharles@noaa.gov or 727/551-5727 or Jack McGovern at john.mcgovern@noaa.gov or 727/824-5383.



Mackerel Amendment 15 Approved for Limited Access and Fishing Year

NOAA Fisheries has approved Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The Amendment:

- 1) establishes a limited access system for the commercial fishery for both Gulf and Atlantic group king mackerel and;
- 2) changes the fishing year for Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel to March 1 through February 28-29.

The Amendment continues the commercial permit cap for an indefinite period, providing social and economic stability in the fishery through a limited access system. The fishing year change allows for more flexibility in fishing activities related to seasonal closures in other fisheries.

The changes became **effective August 8, 2005.** For additional information contact: Steve Branstetter at 727/824-5305 or steve.branstetter@noaa.gov.

Council Member Appointments Announced

Council bids farewell to long-time members

The Secretary of Commerce recently announced the appointment of new members to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The appointments include two at-large seats and an obligatory seat for the State of South Carolina. Council members, nominated by the governors of the respective states, are appointed to serve three-year terms and are limited to serving three consecutive terms. Members represent a diverse background in fisheries and marine conservation, including both recreational and commercial fishermen from the southeast. New members began their terms August 11, 2005 and the terms will continue until August 10, 2008.

In addition, two new members were appointed to serve as agency representatives for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources.

The newest member of the Council, **Frank E. Gibson, III** of Beaufort, SC was recently appointed to the South Carolina obligatory seat on the Council. He replaces Butch Pendarvis, who resigned from the position in early spring. An avid recreational fisherman, Mr. Gibson served as a member of the



Frank Gibson (seated) works with other members of the Council's Marine Protected Area Advisory Panel during a meeting in 2001. Recently appointed to the Council, Mr. Gibson has been active in recreational fishing programs, including the establishment of artificial reefs off the coast of South Carolina.

Council's Marine Protected Area Advisory Panel. He has a long history of involvement in recreational fisheries and marine conservation, having been the

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South Atlantic Commercial Snapper Grouper Fishery Snapshot

	1999	2003	2004
Number of permitted vessels	1,441	1,123	1,066
Vessels with unlimited permits	1,085	879	841
Landings (lbs.)	7,704,007	6,442,148	*
Price per pound	\$2.01	\$1.85	*
Ex-vessel revenue**	\$15,466,056	\$11,914,249	*

* unknown
** adjusted for inflation

Snapper Grouper (Continued from page 1)

Regulatory Amendment as an Alternative

While measures in the interim rule would have ended overfishing immediately, it left little flexibility for fishermen and would have allowed minimum public input. In addition, regulations in an interim rule would have been temporary, possibly leaving a gap between the interim rule and regulations proposed in Amendment 13B by 2007. After hearing concerns from the advisory panel and testimony during the public comment period, the Committee began to focus on a *regulatory amendment* to the Snapper Grouper FMP as a better alternative.

Regulatory amendments allow the Council to implement specific regulations through an abbreviated rulemaking process, but unlike the interim rule, they are broader in scope and allow for public hearings to review management alternatives. “We need to minimize impacts to the greatest extent practicable and using a regulatory amendment reduces impacts significantly,” said Council Chairman Dr. Louis Daniel. Dr. Daniel explained that having regulations in place by 2006 through the regulatory amendment may help to mitigate the impacts of measures proposed in Amendment 13B.

In addition, a regulatory amendment allows the Council to include measures under the red

porgy rebuilding plan to moderately increase the harvest of red porgy with the stock showing signs of recovery. The Snapper Grouper AP and Committee members met jointly in extended sessions to hammer out a long list of management alternatives for the Council to consider in a regulatory amendment and approve for public hearings. A partial overview is included on pages 5 and 6.

Dealing with Data Uncertainty and Developing Options

The Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) provided a report of their review of the 2005 updated stock assessment for black sea bass during the meeting. The assessment indicates a range of 35 to 51 percent reduction in harvest is needed to end overfishing. Black sea bass, as well as vermilion snapper, snowy grouper, and golden tilefish have all been through the Southeastern Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment process. SEDAR provides a multi-level approach to stock assessments, involving data collectors, scientists, stock assessment biologists, and others. Data collected by the states and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is used in the assessments.

The SSC report prompted an intense discussion on the assessments and the reductions

being proposed for black sea bass. While supporting the SEDAR process, Council Chairman and Committee member Dr. Louis Daniel cited specific concerns with numbers from the assessment and the data being used. “The problem is the representative nature of the data that we have to assess this population,” said Dr. Daniel. He also expressed concerns that the stock assessment conclusions were not representative of what the fishermen are seeing on the water.

“This is hard for us to take knowing the stock of fish that is out there,” said AP member Danny Hooks, a commercial fisherman from Carolina Beach, N.C. who fishes with pots for black sea bass. Advisory panel members encouraged additional use of cooperative management to involve the fishermen in sampling.

The SEDAR Steering Committee met in early August and discussed many of the data issues and concerns. The committee, which schedules what species will be assessed through the process, agreed that cooperative efforts between NMFS and the states are necessary in order to improve the data being used in the assessment.

Following the discussion, the focus turned to developing alternatives for the regulatory amendment. In considering alternatives for the deepwater

(Continued page 6)

A partial listing of management alternatives being considered through regulatory amendment to the Snapper Grouper Fishery FMP. The summary below is intended to provide a snap-shot of some alternatives currently being considered. For a complete listing of alternatives and discussion, please visit www.safmc.net or contact the Council office. Note, a “no action” alternative will be included in the regulatory amendment for each species; all weights listed here are gutted weight. Percent reductions represent the amount needed from landings across the board for both commercial and recreational fisheries.

Snowy Grouper

Reduction Needed to End Overfishing: 69%

Average Harvest: 96% Commercial and 4% Recreational

Current Regulations: Commercial - Annual quota 344,508 lbs., trip limit 2,500 lbs. until quota is met, then 300 lb. incidental catch allowance per trip. Recreational - Currently included in the 5-grouper per person/day aggregate bag limit.

Alternatives:

Commercial -

Reduce quota to 84,000 lbs. with a 100 lb. trip limit (or use limit of 10 fish), and prohibit sale, harvest and/or retention over the bag limit after quota is taken;

Reduce quota to 151,000 lbs. with 275 lb. trip limit and same prohibitions on sale and possession after quota is taken;

Other alternative includes a “step-down” approach, beginning with a quota of 151,000 lbs. in year 1, and subsequent reductions in years 2 and 3 to annual quota of 84,000 lbs. Trip limits would be reduced each of the 3 years from current limit.”

Recreational -

Alternatives would decrease the number of snowy grouper in the bag limit to 1 or 2. Note: with a release mortality of nearly 99%, a lower bag limit will not achieve much of a reduction because most released fish would die. A lower bag limit, while not achieving a great reduction, might serve as an incentive to avoid snowy grouper. Recreational harvest is small component but AP members indicated it is increasing.

“The market needs the fish. We need a consistent supply of fish, as consistent as we can get. Something else will fill up the holes and normally it will be imports. It’s hard to get those markets back. These fishermen need to work. If you save the fish and there’s no fishermen later on, it doesn’t matter.” Phil Conklin, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, and wholesale dealer from Murrell’s Inlet, SC



Golden Tilefish

Reduction Needed to End Overfishing: 35%

Average Harvest: 98% Commercial and 2% Recreational

Current Regulations: Commercial - Annual quota 1,001,663 lbs. with trip limit of 5,000 lbs. and incidental allowance of 300 lbs. after quota is met. Recreational – same as snowy grouper.

Alternatives:

Commercial -

Reduce annual quota to 295,000 lbs. with numerous options for trip limits designed to extend the fishery throughout the year;

Utilize a step-down approach in reducing the quota over a 3 year period, similar to snowy grouper with numerous sub alternatives.

Recreational - Same as snowy grouper

Black Sea Bass

Reduction Needed to End Overfishing: 35% - 51%

Average Harvest: 43% Commercial and 57% Recreational

Current Regulations: Commercial - Minimum size limit of 10” Total Length (TL), pot gear only allowed north of Cape Canaveral, Florida and must meet specified design, including escape panels for undersized fish. Recreational - 10” TL size limit and 20 per person/trip bag limit.

Alternatives:

Commercial -

Establish a commercial quota of 347,000 lbs. based on an initial TAC of 806,000 lbs. for both the recreational and commercial fishery. Prohibit sale, harvest or retention after quota is taken; increase commercial size limit from 10”TL to 11”TL; require use of 2” mesh for entire back panel of sea bass pots; and change fishing year from the calendar year to June 1 through May 31;

Other alternatives include various combinations of the above, including options for the TAC and quotas, a “step down” approach to decrease quota over 3-year period, no quota, and commercial closure from March through June.

Recreational -

Recreational allocation of 459,000 lbs. based on initial TAC of 806,000 lbs. for both recreational and commercial fishery. Limit recreational landing to approximate this harvest by increasing the minimum size limit to 12”TL and reducing bag limit to 15 fish per person/trip;

Additional alternatives include various options for TAC and recreational allocations, size limits, and a “step-down” approach to reduce harvest over a 3-year period.

(Continued next page)

A partial listing of management alternatives being considered through regulatory amendment to the Snapper Grouper Fishery FMP (Continued from page 5).

Vermilion Snapper

Reduction Needed: 31%

Average Harvest: 68% Commercial and 32% Recreational

Current Regulations: Commercial - Minimum size limit of 12"TL. Recreational – Minimum size limit of 11"TL size and a bag limit of 10 per person/trip (in addition to the aggregate snapper limit of 10).

Alternatives:

Commercial -

Establish a commercial quota of 821,000 lbs. and prohibit sale, harvest and/or retention over the bag limit after quota is taken;

Above quota plus a trip limit of 720 lbs.;

Above quota with trip limit of 1,080 lbs. and increase size limit to 13"TL;

Several additional alternatives include various options and combinations of quotas, trip limits and size limits.

Recreational -

Increase size limit from 11"TL to 12"TL;

Increase size limit to 12"TL and reduce bag limit to 6 per person/trip;

Prohibit recreational harvest and/or possession from October through December or January through February;

Make separate adjustments to the recreational minimum size and bag limits for the for-hire (those with permits) and private sectors to address alternatives;

Additional alternatives for size and bag limits and seasonal closures.

Red Porgy

Increase Allowance: 102%

Average Harvest: 49% Commercial and 51% Recreational

Current Regulations: Minimum size limit 14"TL for both commercial and recreational, recreational trip limit of 1 per person/day, commercial trip limit of 50 lbs. from May through December. Possession limited to recreational bag limit (1 fish) from January through April. Sale or purchase prohibited January through April.

Alternatives (recreational and commercial combined)

Retain 14"TL size limit and seasonal closure, increase commercial trip limit to 120 red porgy, and increase recreational bag limit from 1 to 3 red porgy per person/day, and establish a commercial quota of 127,000 lbs.;

Additional alternatives for combinations of keeping size limit to 14"TL and various quotas, trip limits and recreational bag limits with continued prohibition of sale from January through April.



Under restrictive regulations the red porgy stock in the South Atlantic is recovering, allowing a moderate increase in harvest for both recreational and commercial fishermen.

(Continued from page 4)

snowy grouper and golden tilefish fishery, concerns for discarded fish became a primary focus. While all species face release mortality, the discard mortality rate (the number of fish that die when caught and released) for these deepwater species is estimated at 90%-99%.

Advisory Panel and Committee members worked diligently to develop a broad range of alternatives that would achieve the needed reductions, minimize impacts, and address discard mortality for all species.

Schedule for Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment

The Council is scheduled to review and approve the regulatory amendment for public hearing during its September meeting in Charleston, S.C. Public hearings will be held this fall. Details regarding the hearings will be publicized as soon as they are available. Final approval of the amendment is scheduled for the December 2005 Council meeting in Carolina Beach, N.C. It is anticipated that regulations approved in the regulatory amendment will become effective in the spring of 2006.



Are IFQs the Answer?

“Do you have a vision of what this industry is supposed to look like?”

Advisory Panel Chairman Mark Marhefka asked the Council this question in frustration after reviewing the regulatory amendment and discussing the possible impacts of the proposed cuts in harvest.

The response from some Council members included the possibility of using Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQs). An IFQ gives a fisherman the right to harvest a specified quantity of fish, expressed by a unit or units that represent a percentage of the Total Allowable Catch of a fishery. While an IFQ program can provide fishermen with more flexibility in how and when to harvest fish, IFQs do not convey ownership of the fish and it doesn't mean that these rights exist in perpetuity. Usually, coupons indicating a specific poundage that can be harvested in a year or season are issued to each fisherman.



The question of a long-term vision for the fishery sparked many more questions than answers in regard to the use of IFQs. The Council has not determined if it will implement IFQs in the future, but will receive additional information when its Controlled Access Committee meets in September. There is currently an ITQ (Individual Transferable Quota) system in place for wreckfish in the South Atlantic region. For more information on IFQs, contact Dr. Vishwanie Maharaj at Vishwanie.maharaj@safmc.net or call the Council office.

Wreckfish, a deepwater species caught near ledges off the southeastern coast of the U.S., were virtually undiscovered until the fishery began to grow in the mid-1980's. Long-lived and slow to reproduce, they could be easily exploited from the depths of their rock ledge habitats. Working with commercial fishermen involved in targeting the deepwater fish, the Council developed an Individual Transferable Quota system in 1992 to help protect the species and provide long-term viability in the fishery.



The Sustainable Seafood Initiative is a consumer-oriented program developed through the S.C. Aquarium that promotes appropriate local seafood in a positive fashion. The program includes a collaborative effort with area restaurants and chefs to promote

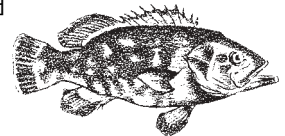
sustainable seafood choices. Wreckfish has been a featured “signature” seafood item for the program, and chefs created new dishes with wreckfish that were well received by restaurant guests. Over 45 restaurants are now involved in the program. Try this recipe from *Fish*, an upscale restaurant in downtown Charleston.

Note: Megan Westmeyer, Program Director for the Sustainable Seafood Initiative will provide the Council with a program overview during its September meeting in Charleston. Council staff currently participates on the advisory board for the program.

Wreckfish Chowder

Ryan Herrmann, Fish (restaurant)
serves 8 as starter

- 2 pounds wreckfish, diced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 2 potatoes, diced
- 6 slices of bacon, cooked and chopped
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- 24 ounces clam juice (3 eight ounce cans)
- 1 quart heavy cream



Saute onions, celery, and carrots over medium heat, until onions are translucent. Add potatoes and bacon; saute for two minutes. Add wreckfish and flour, stir until flour is evenly mixed in. Add liquids and bring to simmer. Season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Simmer for twenty minutes and serve.

Note: grouper can be substituted for wreckfish.

Oculina Bank Research Cruise Planned for October

Teacher workshops, HBOI @Sea Web broadcasts, and Port Day scheduled in conjunction with cruise

The anticipation continues to grow as scientists, outreach specialists, and law enforcement personnel come together for final planning of the next research and monitoring cruise to the Oculina Bank, scheduled for **October 4-11, 2005**. Using NASA's shuttle recovery vessel the *R/V Liberty Star* scientists will embark from Port Canaveral, Florida on a mission to better understand this unique deep sea environment. Researchers plan to visually document earlier sonar bottom-mapping efforts of the area using remotely operated vessels (ROVs), study the genetics of the *Oculina* coral, and assess spawning aggregations of



Deepwater *Oculina* coral thickets provide habitat to a diversity of marine animals.

snapper and grouper associated with the coral. Observation platforms that provide acoustical and video monitoring will be tested in hopes of being used in long-term monitoring of the area.

Outreach efforts kick off with a teacher workshop scheduled for September 17 in Titusville, Florida. During the cruise week, an Educator-at-Sea will be available via the internet through Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution's @Sea Program (

Research scientists mark bottom locations for exploration during the upcoming cruise to the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern and the Experimental Closed Area off the east coast of Florida.

sea.org). Media and VIP shuttles are planned for visits to the research vessel while it is underway. Scientists and law enforcement personnel will be on hand for a special Port Day on October 12 in Port Canaveral. Partners involved include NOAA Undersea Research Program, NOAA Fisheries, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, NOAA Office for Law Enforcement and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. For further information, contact Kim Iverson at kim.iverson@safmc.net. ¶

(Council Appointments Continued from page 2)

founder and past president of the Beaufort Sportfishing and Diving Club and serving as a member of the S.C. Department of Natural Resource's Marine Advisory Committee. Working closely with the SCDNR, Mr. Gibson has coordinated efforts for the deployment of several artificial reef sites off the coast of South Carolina.

Council Vice-Chairman, **George J. Geiger of Sebastian, Florida** has been reappointed to an at-large seat on the Council. Mr. Geiger, a charter captain and environmental educator, also serves as Chairman of the Council's King and Spanish Mackerel Committee. In his role as Committee Chairman he has worked diligently as a liaison to the Gulf of Mexico Management Council in dealing with joint mackerel management issues. Mr. Geiger has also been instrumental in the development of the Evaluation Plan for the Oculina Bank Experimental Closed Area off the coast of Ft. Pierce, FL. The plan outlines research and monitoring, outreach, and law enforcement needs and addresses long-term evaluation for the closed area.

The Council appointment for its other at-large seat is no stranger. Past Council Chairman, **David Cupka** has shifted roles from his seat as the agency representative for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources to his newly appointed at-large seat on the Council. Mr. Cupka has served on the Council as a SCDNR representative since **XXX** and served as chairman of the Council from **XXX to XXX**.

Bidding Farewell

In June, the Council acknowledged the departure of two familiar faces and long-time Council representatives. **Bill Cole**, representative from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and **Dr. John M. Dean** received standing ovations from Council members as they bid an emotional farewell. Mr. Cole retired from the USFWS this past spring. As the South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Cole's responsibilities ranged from Florida to Chesapeake Bay and involved all fisheries throughout this area. As chairman of the



Bill Cole

(Continued next page)

Council Office Receives Summer Visitors

Students and Chilean fisheries director discuss issues with staff

On July 21st, a group of eight of the best college students in the southeastern United States visited the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to learn about the process of fisheries management. The group was led by Dr. Jim Berkson, Chairman of the SAFMC's Scientific and Statistical Committee and an employee of the National Marine Fisheries Service. The visit was part of a four week program designed to encourage these students to enter careers in population dynamics and fisheries management in the southeastern U.S.

The students were selected from a highly competitive application process. The four week program is jointly run and supported by NMFS and Virginia Tech. The students were focusing on two case studies: with four students focusing on black sea bass and four focusing on loggerhead turtles. During the two week road trip the students visited a number of marine institutes, state and federal agencies, and universities to learn about what part each plays in fisheries management and to learn about the opportunities that lie ahead. The project will lead to eventual websites designed by the students highlighting the complexities of the two case studies.

About the program, Dr. Berkson said, "It is difficult finding excellent students with strong math skills that



A select group of college students with interests in careers in fisheries management received presentations from Council staff as part of a four week summer program sponsored by the National Marine Fisheries Service and Virginia Tech.

want to go into this field. With this program we are finding the brightest students, getting them excited about population dynamics and fisheries management, and creating a pipeline that will lead them to careers in southeastern fisheries agencies. It is a win-win for everyone involved."

This program is expected to take place annually. Anyone wishing to find out more information about the program, view the student web sites, or any student wishing to fill out an application can go to the following website: <http://www.nmfs.vt.edu> for more information. †



Council staff met with Ms. Edith Saa, the Director of Fisheries for the Chilean government in July. Her visit was part of a national tour to various fishery management agencies sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, with cooperation from the S.C. World Trade Center. Ms. Saa was inquisitive about the Council's stock assessment process and shared concerns about bycatch issues faced in Chile. She was astonished with the complexity of fishery management policy in the United States. Her U.S. tour included visits to fisheries agencies in Alaska and California. Pictured above (left to right) are staff members Dr. Kathi Kitner, John Carmichael, Chilean Fisheries Director, Ms. Saa, and Kim Iverson.

(Council Appointments Continued)

Council's Habitat and Environmental Protection Committee, Mr. Cole was a driving force behind the development of the Habitat Plan in 1998 and the subsequent evolution of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan currently under development.

As a professor at the University of South Carolina, Dr. Dean served on the Council from 1987 until 1990.

Appointed for a second time in 1999,

he became known for his work with highly migratory species, serving as the Council representative to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and advocate for international cooperation and accountability in fishery management policy. Closer to home, Dr. Dean served as chairman of the Council's Law Enforcement Committee. As professor emeritus from USC, Dr. Dean is actively involved in the development and growth of South Carolina's Sustainable Seafood Initiative, where he serves as an advisory board member. He also plans to travel in the Mediterranean and write a book concerning his work with tunas. †



Dr. John Dean

(Continued from page 2)

3) The Council's FEP process can serve as an important driver for management programs outside its direct purview, but essential to its success, including those of the states, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and others. Partnerships with those other agencies are unusually strong in this region, a strong plus for the overall endeavor.

4) The Council should recommit through the FEP (and before!) to protecting the special places of the region, including the spawning and nursery areas identified through the Habitat Plan and in the proposed MPA network.

5) Finally, the FEP offers a golden opportunity to build in a science-based understanding of changing conditions in the underlying ecosystems of the region, including both abiotic and biotic components — including changing human populations. Seas and coastal systems changing in response to global climate must be fully understood to be able to project optimal, living ecosystems in the future. The Southeast will be dramatically affected by changes in sea level, species composition, and human presence over the next fifty years. The FEP must be designed as a living system of governance that is resilient to those changes. The SAFMC has the best chance of any governance entity in the country to meet these needs, and provide a critical model for others that it can be done. ⚓

Douglas N. Rader, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist
Southeast Oceans Program
Environmental Defense

Dr. Rader currently serves as Chairman of the Council's Habitat & Environmental Protection Advisory Panel.

For more information about the development of Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan and Ecosystem-based Fishery Management, visit the Council's web site at www.safmc.net or contact Gregg Waugh, SAFMC Deputy Director at gregg.waugh@safmc.net.



SOUTH ATLANTIC SEASONAL CLOSURE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

Red Porgy

During **January, February, March and April** each year, the harvest or possession of red porgy in or from the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on board a vessel with a Federal snapper-grouper permit (charter/headboat or commercial) is limited to **one per person per day or one per person per trip**, whichever is more restrictive. Also, **red porgy can neither be sold nor purchased during the closed season**. The minimum size limit for red porgy is 14 inches total length.

Black Grouper and Gag

During **March and April** each year, the possession of black grouper and gag in or from the South Atlantic EEZ on board a vessel with a Federal snapper-grouper permit (charter/headboat or commercial) is limited to **two black grouper or gag, combined, per person per day or two per person per trip**, whichever is more restrictive. Also, black grouper and gag **cannot be purchased or sold during the closed season**. The minimum size limit for black grouper and gag is 24 inches total length.



Amberjack

During **April** each year, the possession of greater amberjack in or from the South Atlantic EEZ on board a vessel with a Federal snapper-grouper permit (charter/headboat or commercial) is limited to **one per person per day or one per person per trip**, whichever is more restrictive. Also, greater amberjack **can neither be sold nor purchased during the closed season**. The recreational minimum size limit for greater amberjack is 28 inches fork length; the commercial size limit is 36 inches fork length.

Mutton Snapper

During **May and June** each year, the possession of mutton snapper in or from the South Atlantic EEZ on vessels with a commercial snapper-grouper permit is limited to **10 per person per day or 10 per person per trip**, whichever is more restrictive. The minimum size limit for mutton snapper is 16 inches total length.

Cobia

No person may possess more than **two cobia per day** in or from the Gulf, Mid-Atlantic, or South Atlantic EEZ, **regardless of the number of trips or duration of a trip**.

The prohibitions listed above on sale/purchase do not apply to fish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold **prior** to the start of the seasonal closure and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. **The trip restrictions apply to all federally permitted vessels regardless of where harvested. Bag limits also apply to recreational fishermen.**

Please pardon our construction!

We are in the process of redesigning the SAFMC web site and hosting capabilities. While making the transition you may find our site temporarily down at times. We apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to providing a new and improved site soon.

**SAFMC Meeting Dates and Locations
2005-2006 Schedule**

<p>September 19-23, 2005 Town & Country Inn 2008 Savannah Highway Charleston, SC 29407 800/334-6660</p>	<p>February 27- March 3, 2006 Jekyll Island Club Hotel 371 Riverview Drive Jekyll Island, GA 31527 800/535-9547</p>	<p>September 18-22, 2006 Town & Country Inn 2008 Savannah Highway Charleston, SC 29407 800/334-6660</p>
<p>December 5-9, 2005 Courtyard Marriott 100 Charlotte Avenue Carolina Beach, NC 28428 800/458-3606</p>	<p>June 12-16, 2006 Wyndam Grand Bay Hotel 2669 S. Bayshore Drive Coconut Grove, FL 800/996-3426</p>	<p>December 4-8, 2006 Sheraton Atlantic Beach 2717 W. Fort Macon Road Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 800/624-8875</p>

Acronyms

- 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
- 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

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting

September 19-23, 2005



**Town & Country Inn
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407
1-800/334-6660 or 843/571-1000**

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

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Monday	1:30 - 5:00	Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting
Tuesday	8:30 - 5:00	Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting (cont.)
Wednesday	8:30 - 12:00 1:30 - 5:00	Controlled Access Committee Meeting Joint Executive/Finance Committees Meeting
Thursday	8:30 - 10:30 10:30 - 12:00 1:30 - 5:00	AP Selection Committee Meeting (closed) Scientific & Statistical Selection Committee Meeting (closed) Council Session
Friday	8:30 - 12:00	Council Session

Mark your calendar...

- 2005
- | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| September 11-15 | <i>American Fisheries Society 135th Annual Meeting</i>
Anchorage, AK www.wdafs.org/Anchorage2005 | South Atlantic Fishery
Management Council
Meeting |
| September 12-16 | <i>Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting</i>
New Orleans, LA www.gulfcouncil.org | September 19-23, 2005 |
| October 4-6 | <i>Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting</i>
Southampton, NY www.mafmc.org | Charleston, SC |
| September 17 | <i>Day at the Docks - Outerbanks Heritage Festival</i>
Hatteras, NC Contact Lynne Foster at 252/986-2515 | |
| October 31 - Nov. 3 | <i>Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Annual Meeting</i>
Galloway, NJ www.asmfc.org | |
| Nov. 28 - Dec. 2 | <i>3rd Annual Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals</i>
Miami, FL http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/coral | |

**Look for the SAFMC display at the *Day at the Docks* - Coastal Heritage Festival
Saturday, September 17 in Hatteras, NC**

Visit the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net