



ATTENTION: Snapper/Grouper Limited & Unlimited Permit Holders

Snapper Grouper permit holders may be affected by potential changes to management of the South Atlantic Commercial Snapper Grouper fishery. **Note: This potential action is not related to the recent Scoping Meetings on Amendment 16 held for Vermillion Snapper and Gag Grouper!** Read below to learn more about what's going on and decide if you want to get involved.

What's going on?

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (or "the Council"), the organization responsible for the conservation and management of fish stocks within the federal 200-mile limit off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and east Florida to Key West, is in the process of **considering** a new management system for the commercial snapper grouper fishery. This new system is called a Limited Access Privilege Program (or "LAP"). LAPs often include management measures called Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) or Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ). Individual Transferable Quota's are simply IFQ's that are transferable.

*An IFQ/ITQ is a specific portion of a fishery's total harvest limit that can be harvested solely by the individual or business holding the IFQ. When IFQ is expressed as a percentage it is called a **quota share**. Though the amount of quota pounds given to quota share holders may change as the total allowable harvest increases or decreases, the privilege to harvest the quota pounds is more-or-less guaranteed for the year (though the IFQ program could be canceled or changed by decision makers at a future time).*

If a program such as this is put in place, the snapper / grouper commercial fishery is likely to experience some changes. Based on the outcomes of similar programs around the world, there are likely to be fewer snapper / grouper permit holders (and vessels) along the coast, but the remaining vessels may have higher profits and would be able to operate for more days each year since there would be no overall quota closures. In order to enter into the fishery, an eligible person would have to purchase or lease quota from someone else. Also with this type of system, fishermen may be able to fish under the total allowable catch for species and help reduce bycatch.

We already have "limited access." Why is the Council looking into LAPs?

Since the first full year after implementation (1999) of the "two for one" program, permit numbers have decreased about 40%. The Council feels the rate of this decrease is not sufficient to re-establish economic viability in the fishery nor to prevent overfishing. More recently, ecological occurrences and regulatory requirements have decreased the ability of fishermen to maintain profitability in the snapper grouper fishery. Management options that enable fishermen increased flexibility may help increase individual profitability. Options that enable a reduction in fleet size are expected to increase total fleet profitability. In the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery, a limited access privilege would be a harvest privilege for a portion of the commercial quota.

How could these changes affect YOU?

There are a number of ways that permit holders, captains, and crews could be positively or adversely affected by a LAP program. Based on experiences in other fisheries with LAPs in place, it has been shown that design of the LAP can help limit the adverse effects while ensuring the positive. Until the end of 2007, the LAP workgroup will be assisting the Council on how to structure a potential LAP program. Program details that are being considered by the LAP workgroup include:

- Eligibility for participation in an LAP;
- How initial allocation of quota might be distributed; and
- Such details as species to be included in an LAP, whether the LAP quota is transferable, any monitoring requirements that might be put in place, and different types of LAPs (IFQ, Community quota, Regional Fishing Associations, etc.)

How can fishermen get involved?

The Council needs to hear from permit holders during the process of developing the LAP program. You can get involved on your own or work together with others. There may be organizations already in place that you could become involved with. Here are some different ways to voice your ideas to the Council:

- **Present your comments during a LAP workgroup or Council meeting.** Input is greatly appreciated!!
See below for dates and locations for the remaining meetings of the LAP workgroup.
- **Talk with someone in your area who is already involved with the Council** (such as a Council member, member of the Snapper / Grouper advisory committee or LAP workgroup – see below).
- **Write a letter to the chair of the Council.** Your comments will become a matter of public record and are an effective way of voicing your opinion. Send comments to: Mr. George Geiger, Chairman, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405.

When and where will the Council and the LAP workgroup meet next?

All meetings of the LAP workgroup are open to the public and participation in the discussions at the meetings is highly encouraged.

LAP workgroup meeting: December 5-6, 2007 Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
SAFMC meeting: December 3-7, 2007 Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
LAP workgroup meeting: TBA, 2 additional meetings in early 2008

Contact a LAPP workgroup member in your state:

NORTH CAROLINA	SOUTH CAROLINA	GEORGIA	FLORIDA
Michael "Chops" Cowdrey, Jr. 910-340-9801 Cowfish0909@yahoo.com	Phil Conklin 843-357-0311	Steve Amick 912-897-6759 Captstevescat2@aol.com	Robert Cardin 772-460-2105 Finchaser357@aol.com
Jack Cox 252-728-9548 Dayboat@ec.rr.com	Mark Marhefka 843-478-5078	Charlie Phillips 912-832-4423 pseafood@darientel.net	Ben Hartig 772-546-1541 bhartig@bellsouth.net
Sean McKeon 252-633-2288 srm@ncfish.org	Steve Shelley 843-235-3474		Bruce Irwin 305-743-7938 MCCFBruce@bellsouth.net
Dan Whittle, 919-881-2914 dwhittle@ed.org	CONTACT A WORKGROUP MEMBER TODAY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAPs, • THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LAP WORKGROUP • HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION 		Scott Zimmerman 305-619-0039 fkcfa1@hotmail.com

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

Scott Baker – NC Sea Grant 910-962-2492 bakers@uncw.edu	Amber Von Harten – SC Sea Grant 843-470-3655 ext 112 ambervh@clemson.edu	Doug Gregory – FL Sea Grant 305-292-4501 drq@ufl.edu
Paul Raymond – NOAA Fisheries 321-269-0004 paul.raymond@noaa.gov	John Reed – NOAA Fisheries 727-551-5750 john.reed@noaa.gov	

For more information

LAPs (including IFQs and ITQs) are complex management strategies, the details of which can not be fully explained in this document. Remember that the Council is only considering the applicability of LAPs for the snapper grouper fishery at this time. Please review the sources listed below for more information on LAPs:

- Read more about LAPs and what the Council is proposing:
<http://www.safmc.net/SocioEconomic/LimitedAccessPrivileges/tabid/486/Default.aspx>
- Read "Top 10 Questions and Answers for LAPs":
<http://www.safmc.net>
- See a list of LAP definitions and other available resources:
<http://www.safmc.net>
- Kate Quigley, Staff Economist for the SAFMC, can be reached at the Council office (843-571-4366 or kate.quigley@safmc.net) with questions about the Limited Access Privilege (LAP) program under consideration.