



South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Public Hearings/Scoping Meetings Set to Address Federal Fisheries Issues Council seeks input on Annual Catch Limits, trip limits, catch shares, and other management measures

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is holding a series of public hearings and scoping meetings regarding fisheries management measures proposed for several federally managed species, including those within the snapper grouper management complex, dolphin (fish), wahoo, golden crab, and octocorals within the South Atlantic region. The measures will impact both commercial and recreational fishermen who fish in federal waters between 3 and 200 miles offshore ranging from the North Carolina/Virginia state line southward to the east coast of Florida and the Florida Keys.

Public Hearings will be held on three separate amendments:

Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment to establish Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures for species not currently listed as undergoing overfishing as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Annual Catch Limits (pounds or number of fish) will be set for species in the snapper grouper management complex as well as dolphin, wahoo, and golden crab.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 9 includes commercial trip limit options for greater amberjack, vermilion snapper, black sea bass, and gag grouper.

Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 2 includes actions relative to the management of octocorals and non-regulatory actions that update existing Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) information. Also, modifications to the management of Special Management Zones in South Carolina, sea turtle release gear requirements for the commercial snapper grouper fishery, designation of new EFH areas and EFH-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern are being considered.

Informal Public Scoping comments will be taken on four amendments currently being considered by the Council:

A Comprehensive Catch Shares Amendment (Amendment 21) is being considered to look at options for catch share programs for species currently under management through quotas (except snowy grouper), effort and participation reduction, and endorsement actions. **Snapper Grouper Amendment 22** explores options for long-term management of red snapper as the stock begins to rebuild, while **Amendment 24** addresses the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to end overfishing and rebuild the red grouper stock. Scoping comments will also be taken on **Golden Crab Amendment 5** to implement a catch share program for the commercial golden crab fishery.

The hearings/meetings will be open from 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Council staff will provide periodic presentations and be on hand to answer questions. Local Council representatives will take formal comments on the public hearing documents any time between those hours. **Public testimony will be video-streamed** live via a link from the Council's website at www.safmc.net as they occur.

The Council is also accepting written and email comments from **January 12, 2011 until 5:00 p.m. on February 14, 2011.** Copies of the public hearing and scoping documents with details on how to submit written comments will be posted on the Council's web site and available by contacting the Council office at 843/571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10.

(Meeting dates and locations on back)

SAFMC Public Hearing/Scoping Meeting Schedule

Monday, January 24

Hilton New Bern Riverfront
100 Middle Street
New Bern, North Carolina 28562
Phone: 252/638-3585

Wednesday, January 26

Crown Plaza Charleston Airport
4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard
N. Charleston, SC 29418
Phone: 843/744-4422

Thursday, January 27

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
175 Bourne Avenue
Pooler, Georgia 31322
Phone: 912/748-8888

Monday, January 31

Jacksonville Marriott Hotel
4670 Salisbury Road
Jacksonville, FL 32256
Phone: 904/296-2222

Tuesday, February 1

International Palms Resort
1300 North Atlantic Avenue
Cocoa Beach, Florida 32931
Phone: 321/783-2271

Thursday, February 3

Key Largo Grande
97000 S. Overseas Highway
Key Largo, Florida 33037
Phone: 305/852-5553

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.