

**Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment
for the South Atlantic Region
*Frequently Asked Questions October 2011***

What is the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment?

- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment would establish annual catch limits and accountability measures for species in the Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin-Wahoo, Golden Crab, and *Sargassum* Fishery Management Plans (FMP) not subject to overfishing.
 - An annual catch limit is the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that if met or exceeded triggers some corrective action, such as a seasonal closure or a quota closure. Annual catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring.
 - Accountability measures are management controls to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded, and to correct overages of annual catch limits if they occur. For example, if an annual catch limit for a species is exceeded, the annual catch limit in the following season could be reduced by the amount of the overage.
- The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires all federally managed fisheries be managed with annual catch limits and accountability measures in 2011.
- [Amendments 17A](#) and [17B](#) to the Snapper-Grouper FMP specified annual catch limits for species subject to overfishing.
- In addition to establishing annual catch limits and accountability measures, the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment would:
 - Remove some species (13) from the snapper-grouper fishery management unit;

Groupers	Jacks	Grunts	Porgies	Triggerfish	Wrasses
Tiger	Crevalle	Black margate	Grass	Queen	Puddingwife
	Yellow	Blue-striped	Sheepshead		
		French			
		Porkfish			
		Smallmouth			
		Spanish			

- Designate some species (six) as ecosystem component species in the snapper-grouper fishery management unit;

Snappers	Grunts	Porgies	Triggerfish	Sea basses
Schoolmaster	Cottonwick	Longspine	Ocean	Bank
				Rock

- Develop species groups for remaining species in the snapper-grouper fishery management unit. Single species annual catch limits would be established for assessed and targeted species, species where annual catch limit=0, and species that cannot be placed in a complex based on the criteria below. Complexes for groups of species would be established for other species using associations based on one or more of the following: life history, catch statistics from commercial logbook and observer data, recreational headboat logbook and private/charter survey, and fishery-independent MARMAP data. When a complex annual catch limit is exceeded, all species in that complex would be subject to accountability measures. When an individual annual catch limit is exceeded, the individual stock would be subject to accountability measures;

Deepwater Complex	Individual ACLs
Yellowedge grouper	Atlantic spadefish
Blueline tilefish	Greater amberjack ₁
Silk Snapper	Blue runner
Misty grouper ₂	Bar jack
Sand tilefish	Gray triggerfish
Queen snapper	Snowy grouper ₁
Black snapper	Golden tilefish ₁
Blackfin snapper	Warsaw grouper ₃
Jacks Complex	Wreckfish
Almaco jack	Scamp
Banded rudderfish	Gag ₁
Lesser amberjack ₂	Red grouper ₁
Snappers Complex	Goliath grouper _{1,3}
Gray snapper	Nassau grouper ₃
Lane snapper	Black sea bass ₁
Cubera snapper ₂	Black grouper ₁
Dog snapper	Speckled hind ₃
Mahogany snapper	Red porgy ₁
Grunts Complex	Hogfish ₁
White grunt	Yellowtail snapper ₁
Sailors choice ₂	Red snapper ₁
Tomtate	Vermilion snapper ₁
Margate	Mutton snapper ₁
Shallow-Water Groupers Complex	Porgies Complex
Red hind	Jolthead porgy
Rock hind	Knobbed porgy
Yellowmouth grouper	Saucereye porgy ₂
Yellowfin grouper ₂	Scup
Coney	Whitebone porgy ₂
Graysby	

1 = Assessed species; 2 = Most vulnerable species in complex (PSA analysis); 3 = Prohibited (ACL = 0).

- Specify an acceptable biological catch for species in the snapper-grouper, dolphin-wahoo, golden crab, and *Sargassum* FMPs. Acceptable biological catch is the level of a stock or stock complex's annual catch that accounts for scientific uncertainty, such as variability or gaps in data;
- Specify annual catch targets for species in the snapper-grouper and dolphin-wahoo FMPs. Annual catch targets are annual catch levels specified below the annual catch limits. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) specified an annual catch target for the recreational sector, to account for management uncertainty, such as compliance rates;
- Establish allocations: Jurisdictional (between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico) for black grouper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper, and Sector (commercial and recreational) for snapper-grouper and dolphin-wahoo species.
- Management measures:
 - Wreckfish:
 - One wreckfish per vessel daily recreational bag limit;
 - Closed season of January 1 through June 30, and September 1 through December 31 each year, for the recreational sector.
 - Dolphin:
 - Prohibit recreational bag limit sales of dolphin from for hire vessels;
 - Establish a minimum size limit for dolphin of 20 inches (50.8 cm) fork length for South Carolina.

Annual Catch Limits (pounds whole weight) established by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment

Snapper-Grouper FMP

Deep-Water Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Shallow-Water Groupers Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
Yellowedge grouper Blueline tilefish Silk snapper Misty grouper Queen snapper Sand tilefish Black snapper Blackfin snapper	343,869	332,039	Red hind Rock hind Coney Graysby Yellowfin grouper Yellowmouth grouper	49,488	48,329
			Individual ACLs	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
			Atlantic Spadefish	36,476	246,365
Jacks Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Bar Jack	6,686	13,834
Almaco jack Banded rudderfish Lesser amberjack	193,999	261,490	Black grouper Blue Runner Gray Triggerfish	90,575 188,329 305,262	155,020 1,101,612 367,303
Snappers Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Greater Amberjack	800,163	1,167,837
Cubera snapper Gray snapper Lane snapper Dog snapper Mahogany snapper	204,552	882,388	Hogfish Mutton Snapper Red pogy Scamp Wreckfish	48,772 157,743 197,652 341,636 237,500	98,866 768,857 197,652 150,936 12,500
Porgies Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Yellowtail Snapper	1,142,657	1,031,218
Jolthead pogy Knobbed pogy Saucereye pogy Whitebone pogy Scup	35,129	112,485			
Grunts Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL			
White grunt Margate Sailor's choice Tomtate	214,624	562,151			

Dolphin-Wahoo FMP

	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
Dolphin	1,065,524	13,530,692
Wahoo	64,147	1,427,638

Golden Crab FMP

Commercial ACL
2,000,000

Sargassum FMP

Commercial ACL
5,000

Accountability measures established by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for species in Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin-Wahoo, Golden Crab, and *Sargassum* FMPs.

Commercial sector:

- No commercial annual catch target.
- If an annual catch limit (i.e., individual or complex) is met or is projected to be met, all subsequent purchase and sale is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit for the species covered by that annual catch limit. For example, if a complex annual catch limit is met or projected to be met, all purchase and sale of all the species in the complex is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit.
- If an annual catch limit (i.e., individual or complex) is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the annual catch limit in the following season by the amount of the overage only if the species is overfished.

Recreational sector:

- Annual catch target equals annual catch limit*(1-percent standard error) or annual catch limit *0.5, whichever is greater.
- Accountability measures would be triggered if the annual landings (i.e., individual or complex) exceed the annual catch limit in a given year.
- If the annual catch limit is exceeded, the following year's landings would be monitored in-season for persistence in increased landings. The Regional Administrator will publish a notice to reduce the length of the fishing season as necessary.

Who would be affected by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment?

- Commercial and recreational fishers who fish for snapper-grouper species, and commercial fishers harvesting golden crab in South Atlantic federal waters (3-200 miles offshore), off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The actions in this amendment would also apply to commercial and recreational fishers who target dolphin and wahoo, from Maine to Florida, along the Atlantic coast.

When might the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment be effective?

- The Council approved the amendment on September 16, 2011, for review by the Secretary of Commerce by the end of 2011.
- Following comment periods on the notice of availability for the amendment and the proposed rule, a decision will be made to approve, partially approve, or disapprove the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment. This decision could be made at the end of 2011.

How can I comment on the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment?

- NOAA Fisheries Service is accepting comments on the notice of availability for the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment from October 20, 2011, to December 19, 2011.
- Comments can be submitted electronically via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. After selecting “submit a comment,” enter the following docket number into the “Search” box: NOAA-NMFS-2011-0087.

Where can I get more information on actions in the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment?

- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SAACLAamend.htm> and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.
- For more information, contact Nikhil Mehta at (727) 824-5305.