

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management  
**Date:** April 13, 2016  
**Subject:** South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Report

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**Purpose:**

Staff will provide Commissioners with a review of actions and discussions from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) March 7-11, 2016, meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.

**Summary:**

The Council took final action on Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs) for snapper-grouper, including approving an SMZ at Warsaw Hole. The SMZs are designed to protect spawning snapper-grouper species and their spawning habitat by prohibiting bottom fishing and anchoring within these zones. The Warsaw Hole SMZ will be a 3.6-square-mile area in federal waters off Key West. If scientific research cannot document spawning fish in an SMZ within 10 years, the SMZ designation for that area and related prohibitions will expire.

The Council is considering regulations to end overfishing of the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock and to rebuild the population. To this end, the Council is considering a reduced quota; a larger, 16-inch minimum size limit; a lower, one-fish recreational bag limit; a July – October recreational season; and a 25-pound commercial trip limit for hogfish in federal waters off East Florida and the Keys. There is general support for a size limit increase and lower bag limit, but commercial harvesters in the Keys are largely against a trip limit.

Other discussions included changes to quota allocations for yellowtail snapper and dolphin, such as allocation shifts between the commercial and recreational sectors and establishment of a common pool allocation for both sectors. These discussions related to early closures of the commercial fisheries for these species in 2015. The Council briefly discussed exploring a limited entry program for the federally-permitted for hire fleet. These discussions will continue at the June Council meeting.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This presentation is for informational purposes and any discussion or direction that the Commission may have.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Jessica McCawley, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries Management