

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management  
**Date:** June 22, 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) June 13-17, 2016, meeting in Cocoa Beach, FL.

**Summary:**

At their June meeting, the Council will receive stock assessment reports for three South Atlantic species: red snapper, gray triggerfish, and golden tilefish. The Council will discuss appropriate management actions for these species based on stock assessment findings. The Council will also receive a report from NOAA Fisheries Service on red snapper fishing mortality in 2015. NOAA Fisheries Service recently announced that there will be no 2016 Atlantic red snapper season.

The Council will continue developing proposed management changes for the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock to end overfishing and rebuild the population. To this end, the Council is proposing a reduced quota of 36,449 pounds, a 16-inch minimum size limit, a 1-fish recreational bag limit, a July through October recreational season, and a 25-pound commercial trip limit for hogfish in federal waters off the Keys and East Florida. 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.

The Council will review management of the spiny lobster fishery because harvest has exceeded the annual quota in the last two consecutive fishing seasons. The South Atlantic Council and Gulf Council jointly manage this fishery in federal waters. The Councils convened the Spiny Lobster Review Panel and the Advisory Panel to discuss the quota overages and potential management responses, and their reports will be provided to both Councils at their respective June meetings.

Other anticipated Council discussions include changing quota allocations for yellowtail snapper and dolphin. The Council is considering temporary and permanent allocation shifts between the commercial and recreational sectors, or establishment of a common pool allocation for both sectors. These discussions relate to early closures of the commercial fisheries for these species in 2015. Lastly, the Council is scheduled to explore the establishment of a limited-entry program for all federally-permitted South Atlantic for-hire fisheries.

Outcomes from the Council meeting will be provided in the presentation to the Commission. Possible changes to federal mutton snapper regulations will be reviewed in a separate agenda item.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff may request direction on Council-related items following the Council meeting.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Jessica McCawley, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries Management