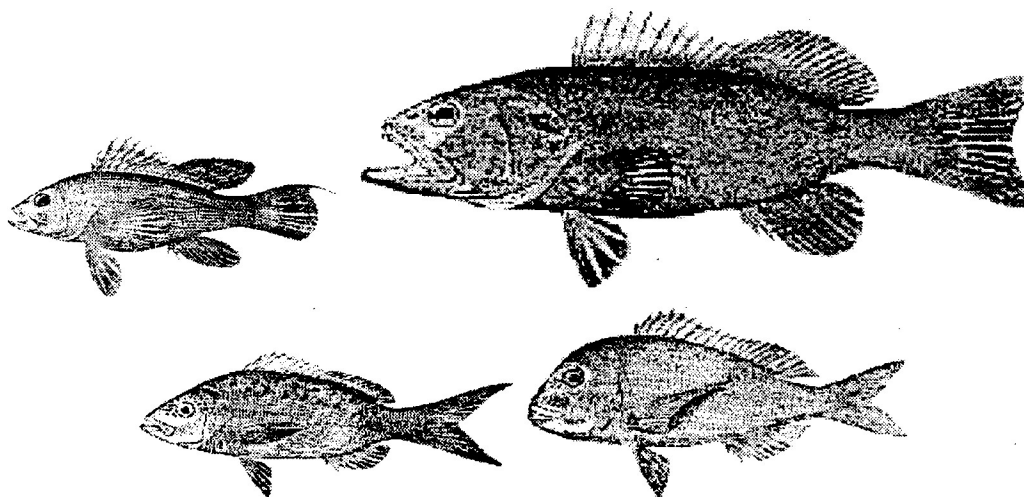




FINAL
AMENDMENT 9
TO THE
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR THE
SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY
OF THE
SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

**INCLUDING A FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT, INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS
REGULATORY IMPACT REVIEW, AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT/
FISHERY IMPACT STATEMENT**



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4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1. Introduction

This section presents management measures and alternatives considered by the Council and the environmental consequences of management. The final supplemental environmental impact statement (FSEIS), regulatory impact review (RIR), and social impact assessment (SIA)/fishery impact statement/FIS are incorporated into the discussion under each of the proposed action items.

Each action is followed by four sub-headings: Biological Impacts, Economic Impacts, Social Impacts, and Conclusion. These are self explanatory with the first three presenting the impacts of each measure considered. The Council's rationale for taking or rejecting the actions/options are presented under the heading "Conclusion". The Council's preferred action is listed below the Action number and options considered by the Council are indicated under the heading "Other Possible Options".

Alternatives that were eliminated from detailed consideration and/or were removed from consideration are included in Appendix I. This information is included to provide a complete record of all alternatives considered by the Council during development of and public hearings on Amendment 9.

4.2. Management Options

4.2.1 ACTION 1. Increase the red porgy minimum size limit from 12" TL to 14" TL for both recreational and commercial fishermen; establish a recreational bag limit of 5 red porgy per person per day; prohibit harvest and possession in excess of the bag limit during March and April; and prohibit purchase and sale during March and April.

These measures would apply to red porgy in or from the South Atlantic EEZ and red porgy in the South Atlantic harvested on board a permitted vessel (commercial or charter/headboat) without regard to where the red porgy is harvested or possessed. The prohibition on purchase would apply to all permitted dealers without regard to where the red porgy is harvested or possessed (i.e., state or federal waters). However, fish could be purchased from areas outside the South Atlantic provided there was an appropriate paper trail documenting the area of origin.

In Amendment 7 the council's position was to defer action on a red porgy quota until a new assessment became available. An updated stock assessment was presented to the council in June 1994 (Huntsman, Vaughan, and Potts, 1994). The following points are taken directly from the assessment report (**Note: The assessment results refer to SSR. Future assessments will refer to SPR.**):

- Evidence from every source: catch size, observations by fishermen, and analyses of size distributions, indicate that the red porgy is drastically overfished. The history of the red porgy fishery appears to follow what is now regarded as a classic three-phase pattern exhibited by fisheries for many species: (1) an early period of increasing catches as effort increased on a near-virgin stock, (2) a peak of yield as the stock reached maximum productivity, and (3) a period of declining catches (late 1980's and early 1990's) occurring as effort (including increased effectiveness of existing fishermen and vessels) became sufficiently high to take catches that limited the reproductive capacity of the stock.
- Population biomass of red porgy increased from 1972, the first year of study, to a peak of 130% to 190% (depending on M and analysis) of the initial value and declined almost continuously until 1992, the final year of study.