

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XF932]

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Meeting of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold meetings of the Habitat and Ecosystem Committee; the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review Catch Advice and Data Committee; and the Snapper Grouper Committee. The meeting week will also include a formal public comment session and closed and open meetings of the Full Council.

DATES: The Council meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. on Monday, September 14, 2026, until 12 p.m. on Friday, September 18, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Meeting address: The meeting will be held at the Drury Plaza Hotel North Charleston, 2934 West Montague, North Charleston, SC 29418; phone (843) 938–1503. The meeting will also be available via webinar. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Myra Brouwer, Deputy Director for Management, SAFMC; phone (843) 302–8436 or toll free (866) SAFMC–10; FAX (843) 769–4520; email: myra.brouwer@safmc.net.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Meeting information, including agendas, overviews, and briefing book materials will be posted on the Council's website at: <https://safmc.net/council-meetings/>. Webinar registration links for the meeting will also be available from the Council's website.

Public comment: Public comment on agenda items may be submitted through the Council's online comment form available from the Council's website. Written comments will be accepted from August 28, 2026, until September 18, 2026. These comments are accessible to the public, part of the Administrative Record of the meeting, and immediately available for Council consideration. A formal public comment session will also be held during the Council meeting.

The items of discussion in the individual meeting agendas are as follows

Council Session I, Monday, September 14, 2026, 8:30 a.m. Until 12 p.m. (Closed Session):

The Council will meet in closed session to receive a litigation brief, if needed, review proposed changes to the advisory panel policy to clarify term limits, consider establishing chair and vice chair positions for the Citizen Science Operations Advisory Panel (AP), hold a discussion related to membership in the Executive Committee, review the Award of Excellence criteria, and make appointments to APs and Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) workshop observers.

Council Session I, Monday, September 14, 2026, 1:30 p.m. Until 5 p.m

Newly appointed Council members will be sworn in and the 2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award will be presented. The Council will receive the following reports: a litigation brief, state agencies, Council liaisons, and the Shrimp Workgroup. The Council will also receive an update on Executive Order 14276. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) will provide updates to the Council, including a presentation on discards in South Atlantic fisheries and the Observer Program. The Council will also receive a presentation on landings of unmanaged species and an update on the Resilient Fisheries projects. A presentation to review information on the scoping process for potential Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan modifications will also be delivered. Lastly, the Council will receive updates on managed species outside its jurisdiction.

Habitat and Ecosystem Committee, Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 8:30 a.m. Until 10:30 a.m

The Committee will receive a presentation on the Ecosystem Information Review project and a report from the Habitat and Ecosystem AP.

SEDAR Catch Advice and Data Committee, Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 10:45 a.m. Until 3:30 p.m

The Committee will receive a report from the SEDAR Steering Committee, review assessment updates and the SEDAR schedule, and conduct the stock risk rating for hogfish, black grouper, and gag. The Committee will review terms of reference for red grouper, snowy grouper, and vermilion snapper. The Committee will review and approve an outline and timeline for the Standardized Bycatch Reduction

Methodology review and receive an update on the Southeast Reef Fish Survey and the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program.

Snapper Grouper Committee, Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 3:45 p.m. Until 5 p.m., Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 8:30 a.m. Until 3:45 p.m., and Thursday, September 17, 2026, 8:30 a.m. Until 2:30 p.m

The Committee will receive updates from the NMFS on amendments undergoing rulemaking and Exempted Fishing Permit applications. The Committee will continue discussion of Amendment 61 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan to evaluate the composition of the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit.

The Committee will discuss Amendment 44 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan addressing jurisdictional and sector allocations of yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper, and Regulatory Amendment 39 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan addressing sunset of Spawning Special Management Zones. The Committee will consider approving these two amendments for public hearings. The Committee will continue discussing Amendment 60 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan addressing commercial management measures and receive a presentation on Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and notification requirements. The Committee will review comments from public hearings held over the summer and approve all actions in the amendment. A public hearing on Amendment 60 will also be held, and comment will be accepted during the public comment period.

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4 p.m.—Public comment will be accepted from individuals attending the meeting in person and via webinar on all items on the Council's meeting agenda. The Council Chair will determine the amount of time provided to each commenter based on the number of individuals wishing to comment.

The Committee will continue discussing Regulatory Amendment 38 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, which addresses vessel limits for headboats, and will receive an update on the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) and the Wreckfish MSE. The Committee will provide comments and draft conclusions and recommendations for the Wreckfish Individual Transferable Quota Program Review. Lastly, the Committee will receive a report from the Blueline Tilefish Joint Sub-Committee and

review and approve topics for the fall meeting of the Snapper Grouper AP.

**Council Session II, Thursday,
September 17, 2:45 p.m. Until 5 p.m**

The Council will hold elections for Chair and Vice Chair. The Council will then discuss a comprehensive amendment to address commercial trip limit sale and revise the abbreviated framework process. The Council will discuss potential modifications to the requirements for sea turtle release gear, management of cownose rays, and review and approve topics for the fall meeting of the Mackerel Cobia AP.

**Council Session II, Friday, September
18, 8:30 a.m. Until 12 p.m**

The Council will review its workplan, reports from the committees that met during the week and the June 2026 report from the Executive Committee, review upcoming meetings, and discuss any other business as needed.

Documents regarding these issues are available from the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**).

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) 5 days prior to the meeting.

Note: The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 12, 2026.

Anna Michelle Harrison,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration**

[RTID 0648-XF936]

**Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to
Specified Activities; Taking Marine
Mammals Incidental to Ferndale Pier
Maintenance Activities in Ferndale,
Washington**

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of renewal incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued a renewal incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to Petrogas Pacific, LLC (Petrogas) to harass marine mammals incidental to Ferndale Pier Maintenance Activities in Ferndale, Washington.

DATES: This renewal IHA is valid from August 13, 2026, through July 31, 2027.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the original application, renewal request, and supporting documents (including NMFS **Federal Register** notices of the original proposed and final authorizations, and the previous IHA), as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Pauline, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The MMPA prohibits the “take” of marine mammals, with certain exceptions. Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to NMFS) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are promulgated or, if the taking is limited to harassment, an IHA is issued.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the

taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses (where relevant). Further, NMFS must prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other “means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact” on the affected species or stocks and their habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for certain subsistence uses (referred to here as “mitigation measures”). NMFS must also prescribe requirements pertaining to monitoring and reporting of such takings. The definition of key terms such as “take,” “harassment,” and “negligible impact” can be found in the MMPA and NMFS’s implementing regulations (see 16 U.S.C 1362; 50 CFR 216.103).

NMFS’ regulations implementing the MMPA at 50 CFR 216.107(e) indicate that IHAs may be renewed for additional periods of time not to exceed 1 year for each reauthorization. In the notice of proposed IHA for the initial IHA, NMFS described the circumstances under which we would consider issuing a renewal for this activity, and requested public comment on a potential renewal under those circumstances.

Specifically, on a case-by-case basis, NMFS may issue a one-time 1-year renewal IHA following notice to the public providing an additional 15 days for public comments when: (1) up to another year of identical, or nearly identical, activities as described in the Detailed Description of Specified Activities section of the initial IHA issuance notice is planned; or (2) the activities as described in the Description of the Specified Activities and Anticipated Impacts section of the initial IHA issuance notice would not be completed by the time the initial IHA expires and a renewal would allow for completion of the activities beyond that described in the **DATES** section of the notice of issuance of the initial IHA, provided all of the following conditions are met:

- A request for renewal is received no later than 60 days prior to the needed renewal IHA effective date (recognizing that the renewal IHA expiration date cannot extend beyond 1 year from expiration of the initial IHA). The request for renewal must include the following:

- An explanation that the activities to be conducted under the requested renewal IHA are identical to the activities analyzed under the initial