

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 622**

[Docket No. 140501394–5279–02; RTID 0648–XF957]

Fisheries of the South Atlantic; Commercial Closure for Blueline Tilefish in the South Atlantic

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS implements an accountability measure for the commercial harvest of blueline tilefish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. NMFS estimates that commercial landings of blueline tilefish will reach the commercial annual catch limit (ACL) for the 2026 fishing year. Accordingly, NMFS closes the commercial sector of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ to protect the blueline tilefish resource from overfishing.

DATES: This temporary rule is effective from August 24, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michelle Walsh, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727–824–5305, email: michelle.walsh@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic includes blueline tilefish and is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP is implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622. All weights in this temporary rule are given in round weight.

The regulation codified at 50 CFR 622.193(z)(1)(i) specifies the commercial ACL and in-season accountability measure for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic. The commercial ACL is 117,148 pounds (53,137 kilograms). NMFS is required to close the commercial sector of blueline tilefish when NMFS projects that commercial landings reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL. NMFS projects that the commercial ACL will have been reached by August 24, 2026. Accordingly, the commercial sector of South Atlantic blueline tilefish is closed

from August 24, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

During the commercial closure, all sale or purchase of blueline tilefish is prohibited and harvest or possession of blueline tilefish in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits. These bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, *i.e.*, in State or Federal waters (50 CFR 622.193(z)(1)(i)).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.193(z)(1)(i), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the regulations associated with the closure of the blueline tilefish commercial sector at 50 CFR 622.193(z)(1)(i) have already been subject to notice and public comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the commercial closure. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment are contrary to the public interest because there is a need to immediately implement this action to protect blueline tilefish, because the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the commercial ACL. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the commercial ACL.

For the reasons already stated, there is also good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

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

Dated: August 19, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 622**

[Docket No. 260505–0124; RTID 0648–XF958]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of America, and South Atlantic; 2026 Commercial Closure for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex in the South Atlantic

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS implements an accountability measure (AM) for the commercial harvest of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex in South Atlantic Federal waters. NMFS projects that commercial landings of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex will reach the commercial annual catch limit (ACL) for 2026. Therefore, NMFS closes the commercial sector of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex in South Atlantic Federal waters to protect the scamp and yellowmouth grouper resource from overfishing.

DATES: This temporary rule is effective from August 24, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karla Gore, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727–824–5305, email: karla.gore@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic includes scamp and yellowmouth grouper and is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NMFS, approved by the Secretary of Commerce, and is implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622. All weights in this temporary rule are in round weight.

The final rule for Amendment 55 to the FMP was effective on July 6, 2026, and among other measures, created a new scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex (91 FR 33661, June 4, 2026). The commercial annual catch limit (ACL) for the scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex for the 2026 fishing year is 46,147 pounds (20,932