



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Ben Hartig, Chair  
Dr. Michelle Duval, Vice Chair

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director  
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

June 18, 2015

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Bonnie Ponwith

FROM: Bob Mahood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Mahood", is written over the printed name "Bob Mahood".

SUBJECT: Request for Blueline Tilefish Stock Projections

Upon review of projections for the blueline tilefish stock, the SAFMC's SSC determined that existing analyses no longer represent best scientific information available. The SSC therefore requested revised projections to address recent landings and concerns over continued effort shifts and apparent spatial differences in stock productivity. The Council requests that the Center provide revised projections, based on P\* values of 50% and 30% applied for 2016-2020 and including yield in pounds and numbers of fish for landings and discards, for the scenarios described as follows.

1. Incorporating actual landings through 2014 and the best estimate of 2015 landings, including landings from the MAFMC and NEFMC areas for all years. Projections are requested using both the VTR and MRIP estimates for the recreational sector in the Northeast areas, and the Center is asked to provide guidance on the appropriateness of each data stream.
2. Incorporating actual landings through 2014 and the best estimate of 2015 landings (see above for including MAFMC and NEFMC areas) and reflecting higher recruitment during the projection period (those years since the terminal assessment year) than that estimated in base projection scenarios. Multiple scenarios using different fixed recruitment values, as described below, to reflect the range of recruitment uncertainty should be provided in response to this request.
  - The first scenario, reflecting an approach recommended by the SSC, is to base the alternative recruitment assumption on the levels estimated by the assessment model as necessary to support increased landings observed since around 2006. The recommendation to accommodate this approach is to base recruitment on 5 and 10 year averages of recruitment estimated by the assessment for 2007 and earlier. These years reflect the cohorts that largely supported those catches, while avoiding likely impacts of the regulatory closure in 2011. These values, 250,680

age-1 fish for the 5-year (2003-2007) period and 182,928 age-1 fish for the 10-year period (1998-2007), should be used as fixed recruitment levels (age-1 abundance) for 2008 and later.

- The second scenario requested to address recruitment uncertainty is to provide projection outputs based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of recruitment estimated in the uncertainty evaluation of the base updated projections.
- Recognizing that there are likely other approaches to addressing the SSC request to explore alternative recruitment scenarios, the Center is encouraged to provide any further alternatives that it deems appropriate.

To allow review by the SSC prior to consideration of these projections by the Council at its September 14-18, 2015, meeting, we are requesting that results be provided to Council staff by August 12, 2015.

We appreciate your assistance in addressing these requests. Please contact John Carmichael if you have any questions.

cc: Council members and staff  
Theo Brainerd and Tom Jamir  
Jack McGovern and Rick DeVictor  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Chris Moore, MAFMC Executive Director