

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Job Description

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The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is the South Atlantic Council's primary technical advisory body. SSC's are charged in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) with developing, evaluating, and peer reviewing all technical aspects of council documents. SSC are expected to provide a broad suite of technical recommendations related to all aspects of the Council's management program, including addressing biological, social, economic, and environmental aspects. SSC's also play a role in stock assessment development and review; in the Southeast region this responsibility is handled through the SEDAR process.

I. SSC Responsibilities

SSC charges stated in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act

1. Assist in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to such Council's development and amendment of any fishery management plan.
2. Provide to the Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and sustainability of fishing practices.
3. Provide fishing level recommendations for use by the Council in developing annual catch limits.

4. Assist the council in developing multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes.

SSC Charges stated in the SEDAR Guidelines

1. Participate in SEDAR workshops
2. Fill dedicated SEDAR workshop positions
3. Assist in presenting SEDAR assessments to the full SSC
4. Conduct and review SEDAR assessment updates

II. SSC Objectives Stated in the SAMFC SSC Operating Procedures

1. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) shall provide expert scientific and technical advice to the Council on the development of fishery management policy, on establishing the goals and objectives of fishery management plans (FMP) or amendments, and on the preparation of such plans or amendments.
2. When requested by the Council, the SSC, through its Biological and/or Socioeconomic Subcommittees, shall supply the Council with a critical review of the scientific information necessary to make management decisions, such as stock assessments and reviews (e.g., SEDAR), reports on stock status, socioeconomic impacts of management measures, sustainability of fishing practices, and habitat and ecosystem status. Such information may include a recommendation on ABC, where appropriate, based on the best scientific information available.
3. The SSC shall assist the Council in the development, collection, and evaluation of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to the Council's development and amendment of any FMP.
4. The SSC shall assist the Council in determining what statistical, biological, economic, social or other scientific information is needed for the development of a FMP or amendment that meets the requirements of the Act; and shall advise the Council as to the best way of obtaining this information, including identifying entities with ongoing research programs that may be able to develop the needed information.
5. The SSC shall advise the Council on preparing comments on any FMP or amendments prepared by the Secretary or Secretary's delegate or other Councils which are transmitted to the Council pursuant to the Act.
6. The SSC shall comment on, if requested by the Council, any proposed regulations which the Council deems necessary to implement any FMP or any amendment to a FMP which is prepared by the Council.
7. The SSC shall assist the Council in establishing criteria for judging plan effectiveness.
8. The SSC shall submit to the Council such reports as the Committee deems appropriate and such reports as are requested by the Council.
9. The SSC shall perform such other necessary and appropriate duties as may be requested by the Council to carry out its functions under the Act.

III. Meetings and Activities to Fulfill Responsibilities and Objectives

SSC Meetings

The SSC meets twice per year. Most SSC meetings will be held in Charleston SC, typically beginning on Tuesday morning and adjourning Thursday afternoon. Meeting time is devoted to

presentation of materials, discussion of issues, and preparation of a written report for submission to the Council. The Council expects a final written report within two weeks of the conclusion of each SSC meeting.

Ad-Hoc and Subcommittee Meetings

The SSC occasionally convenes topical subcommittees or ad hoc committees to address specific issues. Such committees conduct their business in the most efficient and convenient means available, which may include email strings, conference calls, and meetings. SSC members will be asked to volunteer for these committees.

SEDAR Workshops

The SSC is expected to play a major role in stock assessment development and review. This role is facilitated and supported by the SEDAR process, specifically developed to increase scientist and constituent involvement in stock assessments. SSC members are expected to volunteer to participate in SEDAR workshops. An SSC member will serve as chair of SEDAR review panels and up to 3 SSC members may be appointed as reviewers.

Technical committees

Council technical committees organized around individual FMPs increase the workforce available for SEDAR assessment tasks, develop supporting documentation and preliminary evaluates for SSC tasks such as providing fishing level recommendations required under the MSA, and produce SAFE reports. SSC members are encouraged to also participate in technical committees that are within their realm of experience and expertise.

IV. Council Expectations Regarding Meeting Deliberations

- The SSC shall operate under consensus rather than formal voting. Consensus statements should be developed that provide the Council guidance on the full range of alternatives and that address uncertainties related to recommendations.
- SSC recommendations shall be based on science and scientific principles. Discussions and deliberations shall not consider possible future management actions, agency financial concerns, or social and economic consequences.
- SSC members shall maintain appropriate professional standards at all times when representing the Council, whether at an SSC meeting or other Council-supported activity. SSC members should be aware of the broader audience interested in their deliberations, and that SSC meetings are public meetings and often broadcast via the internet. Off the cuff remarks and inappropriate language should be avoided.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated. The Council recognizes that advancement in science is often preceded by disagreement and therefore encourages spirited discourse. However, professionalism must be upheld and those who descend into personal attacks or intimidation may be removed from the Committee.
- All members are expected to participate in the Committee's discussions and to development of the workshop report.
- Members are expected to provide constructive suggestions and alternative solutions; criticisms should be followed with recommendations and solutions.