

SSC Terms of Reference for the South Atlantic Gag Grouper SEDAR 10 Assessment

October 2006

The Council has provided the following SSC Terms of Reference (TOR) for the gag grouper SEDAR 10 assessment. Specific items to be provided by the SSC include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Examine the data, assessment, and review workshops TORs and determine if each of the Terms of Reference items were met.
- B. Examine the Review Panel's recommendation that, until the next assessment, the Council adopt a MSST value for gag grouper at the lowest observed SSB (around 5 million lbs) in place of the current definition $[(1 - M)B_{MSY}]$.
- C. Does the absence of commercial and recreational data from the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys affect the outcome of the assessment?
- D. Any SSC suggestions on how to have recreational and commercial data provided from the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for inclusion in future assessments and updates. (Note: this applies to most if not all of the SEDAR assessments and updates.)
- E. Should a table of the total landings in pounds be included for the Council?
- F. How adequate is the assessment with the lack of age and length sampling, the lack of a fishery independent index, and highly variable MRFSS estimates?
- G. In Section 2.2, the Consensus Report states that the lack of length samples from MRFSS resulted in the use of headboat length compositions to reflect the charterboat length compositions. Are headboat and charterboat fishing similar enough to make this presumption?
- H. Relative to SSB, the run with the headboat CPUE data omitted shows the population increasing in recent years, reaching the highest terminal value of all the runs. Conversely, the run with the commercial handline CPUE omitted results in the lowest SSB value in the terminal year. Examine the conflicting indices of abundance. Is it reasonable to conclude, as the Review Panel did, that this highlights the balance fit between these two indices?
- I. Examine the increase, in recent years, of the catch by the shore mode recreational sectors. Is one explanation that the catch is from bridges in Florida?
- J. The Review Panel questioned whether the ADMB statistical catch at age model conforms to the Model Acceptance Note 1 in the TOR for the Assessment Workshop. Examine the implications of the use of a model that doesn't conform to the TOR. Provide recommendations of an appropriate model given the Review Panel's concerns. Has ADMB been peer-reviewed?