



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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SEDAR COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

December 3, 2013

PORTIONS CLOSED SESSION

Items to be addressed at this meeting: (1) SEDAR activities update, (2) SAFMC assessment planning, (3) SEDAR assessment presentations, (4) SEDAR Steering Committee recommendations, and (5) SEDAR administrative approvals.

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Committee last met September 2013.

3. **SEDAR ACTIVITIES**

Attachment 1 provides an overview of SEDAR projects. Table 1 below summarizes upcoming South Atlantic assessments.

The blueline tilefish benchmark conducted through SEDAR 32 was reviewed by the SSC in October. As discussed at the last meeting of this Committee, the gray triggerfish assessment was removed from SEDAR 32 and will be continued during SEDAR 41, with red snapper.

SEDAR 36, a standard assessment addressing snowy grouper, was not peer reviewed by the SSC in October as planned, due to the lack of a presentation addressing the assessment. The SSC plans to conduct a peer review at its April 2014 meeting, with recommendations available to the Council in June 2014.

The FL FWCC is completing an assessment of mutton snapper. It will be reviewed by the SSC in April and recommendations will be provided to the Council in June 2014.

FL FWCC is also working on an assessment of hogfish. Completion is scheduled for June 2014, with review by the SSC in October 2014. SSC recommendations will be provided to the Council in December 2014.

The Steering Committee met October 1 - 2, 2013 in Charleston, SC (**Attachment 2**). Federal representatives were not able to attend due to the shut down. Nonetheless, the Committee had an effective discussion of SEDAR policies and procedures. A follow-up conference call or webinar will be scheduled to take final action. In anticipation of the shut down, scheduling issues were reviewed and approved prior to October 1, resulting in the final 2014 scheduled provided in Table 1.

ACTION: As necessary

Table 1. SEDAR Assessment Projects for the South Atlantic, 2013 - 2015.

Year	SEDAR #	Stocks	Type	Terminal Data	Assessment Complete
2013	U	Black Sea Bass	Update	2012	April 2013
	36	Snowy Grouper	Standard	2012	October 2013
	32	Blueline tilefish	Benchmark	2012	October 2013
	U	Mutton snapper	Update	2012	April 2014
2014	U	Gag	Update	2012	April 15, 2014
	37	Hogfish	Benchmark	2013	June 2014
2015	41	Red snapper Gray triggerfish	Benchmark start 8/2014	2013	August 1, 2015
	U	Tilefish	Update	2014	October 1, 2015
	U	Red grouper	Update	2014	October 1, 2015
	U	Vermilion snapper	Update	2014	October 1, 2015
	U	Black grouper	Update	2014	April 2015
2016		Scamp Gray snapper	Benchmark start ~7/2015	2015	April 2016
		red pogy	Benchmark	2014	October 1, 2016

4. SAFMC ASSESSMENT PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

The long term assessment planning approach reviewed by this Committee at the September 2013 meeting was forwarded to the SSC and the SEFSC Beaufort assessment team for comment. The SSC supported the approach, and expanded on the topic by requesting a workshop devoted to the topic be held immediately prior to their next meeting to address specific scheduling and ways of increasing efficiency, such as combining similar stocks and identifying appropriate assessment methods for priority stocks. The SSC recommended that a 5 year interval between assessments could be excessive, given the typical performance of projections that far into the future.

Details on the SSC discussion are provided in the SSC report (**Attachment 3**). Topics identified for consideration in the workshop are summarized here:

- Species groupings for assessment efficiency
- Specific timing between assessments and for individual stocks
- Use of data poor methods
- Identification of special needs stocks and potential “choke” species (those that may trigger extreme or unexpected management actions)
- Impacts of life history and management regimes on assessment timing

Because the SSC identified a number of enhancements to consider for this approach as well as additional scheduling considerations that could increase productivity, and expressed an interest in pursuing these topics further in a workshop format, the intended next step discussed at the last meeting of presenting a long term plan was not pursued at this time. If the Council supports the SSC workshop request, a proposed schedule will be developed with SSC input

and provided for this Committee's consideration in June 2014. Given that the assessment schedule is set through 2016, as indicated in Table 1 above, no delay in implementation or adverse impacts to assessment planning is expected if the topic is tabled until June 2014.

ACTION:

- Consider the SSC request to devote a workshop to assessment planning
- Provide guidance on workshop topics

5. PRESENTATION OF SEDAR ASSESSMENTS

SEDAR operating procedures (**Attachment 4**) call for assessment presentations to the Cooperator's (i.e., SAFMC) technical body (SSC) by representatives of the lead assessment agency. The relevant text addressing assessment presentations is found in Section 2.5, repeated here: "*SEDAR expects lead analysts to present assessment findings to the technical body identified by the Cooperator (e.g., SSC); Cooperators should contact these individuals regarding meeting locations and times.*" The SSC prefers that such presentations be given in person. To facilitate that desire and comply with the SEDAR policy, memos are provided to the SEFSC Director prior to each SSC meeting indicating the topics for which presentations are desired, as well as any other deliverables which may be necessary for the SSC to address its agenda topics (**Attachment 5**). In addition, the SSC requests that all materials for it to review be provided at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting, with no distinctions or exceptions made for presentations. However, at the last two SAFMC SSC meetings, assessment scientists from the SEFSC have not attended the SSC meetings to present assessment findings.

In April 2013, presentations on the SEDAR 28 Benchmark assessments of cobia and Spanish mackerel, and the Standard assessment of black sea bass, were given over webinar, with presentations provided to the Committee either just before or shortly after the presentation was made. The SSC had a brief discussion on this approach, indicating that attendance by presenters was preferred, and suggesting that, when multiple assessments are involved, a representative of the group should attend the meeting and others could continue to participate remotely via webinar.

At the most recent meeting of October 22-24, 2013, SEFSC participation was requested for a number of topics, including presentation of the SEDAR 32 Benchmark assessment of blueline tilefish and the SEDAR 36 Standard assessment of snowy grouper. In making the participation request, the importance of a presentation on snowy grouper, for which the SSC provides a peer review during its meeting, was highlighted. SEFSC staff did not attend the October meeting, instead participating via webinar. However, unlike during the prior April meeting, no presentations were provided over the webinar. Nonetheless, the SSC considered the blueline tilefish benchmark, relying upon an overview provided by the Review Panel Chair (an SSC member, per SEDAR guidelines). The SSC was comfortable addressing this stock because a public peer review, in which several SSC members participated, was conducted through the SEDAR process. Conversely, the SSC did not provide a peer review of the Standard assessment of snowy grouper. The difference in the two stocks is that the SSC is expected to provide a peer review of Standard SEDAR assessments, and members were unwilling to do so without any presentation by the assessment team.

ACTION:

- Provide guidance as necessary.

6. SEDAR Approvals

Administrative actions are necessary for the gag grouper update and SEDAR 41, benchmark assessments of red snapper and gray triggerfish. Documents provided here incorporate SSC recommendations.

The SSC was provided two versions of the SEDAR 41 TORs, along with the following explanation:

Two versions of the TORs are provided for consideration. The first is based on the approved SEDAR template TORs, intended to provide a consistent starting point. It includes an additional TOR in the DW section, requesting discussion of data uncertainties, included in response to the recent publication of NS2 guidelines. The second version has more extensive changes. As part of the TOR development process, the SEFSC analysts are asked to comment, so that any specific analytical items or issues of concern for the stock can be identified early in the process. In this instance, the analytical team provided extensive comment on the wording of TORs for the Review Workshop. As these suggested changes go beyond the identification of specific analytical needs and could impact how the RW approaches its tasks, the SSC is provided both TOR versions.

Discussion on the alternative TORs centered around the degree to which TORs should ask the Review Panel to provide some judgment on the adequacy of the methods and data. The SSC supported adding language to the TORs requesting consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of data and methods, and recommended otherwise retaining the default RW TOR provisions. The SSC also recommended that the Steering Committee consider the alternative language proposed by SEFSC that removes the requirements in the default TORs to consider whether methods and data are “sound and robust”, estimates are “reliable” or approaches are “consistent with accepted practices.”

ACTION:

- Discuss and approve gag grouper update TORs (**Attachment 6**)
- Discuss and approve SEDAR 41 schedule and TORs (**Attachment 7**)
- Consider forwarding to the SEDAR Steering Committee the SSC recommendation to evaluate the language in the default benchmark TORs
- Discuss and approve SEDAR 41 appointments (**Attachment 8, closed session**)

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. ADJOURN