



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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SEDAR (TBD) Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Terms of Reference Draft: 10/21/2025

1. Update the SEDAR 78 Atlantic Spanish Mackerel assessment model with data using a terminal year of the 2026-2027 fishing year. Data providers may include preliminary or partial data for more recent years that could be used in the stock assessment model or projection analyses, with inclusion in the stock assessment model determined by the lead analyst based on quantity and quality of the most recent data.
2. Incorporate the latest BAM model configurations and data calculation methods, detailing the changes made between the SEDAR 78 operational assessment model and the proposed assessment model. Provide a model run using the SEDAR 78 assessment configuration including recent years data (following NMFS Procedure 01-101-11).
3. Consider new and updated information on life history, natural mortality, discard mortality, the stock-recruit relationship, commercial and recreational landings and discards. Document any changes or corrections made and provide updated input data tables.
 - a. Provide commercial, recreational, and combined landings and discards in pounds and numbers.
 - b. Use MRIP recommended approaches for recreational catch to reduce PSEs below 50%; Investigate extreme values (high or low) for wave specific estimates of catch throughout the time series.
 - c. Consider the newest methods for estimating natural mortality including a subset of Then et al. 2015, Hamel and Cope 2022, or other research. Consider estimation of natural mortality within the stock assessment.
 - d. Address as many of the recommendations as possible of the South Atlantic SSC Catch Level Projections workgroup outlined on page 16 of the final workgroup report found [here](#).
4. Evaluate and document the following specific changes in input data or deviations from the previous assessment model:
 - a. Provide sensitivity analyses as needed to compare assessment results between new values in this assessment and values from SEDAR 78.
 - b. Incorporate fishery dependent and fishery independent data streams north of Cape Hatteras, NC. Investigate the use of the fishery independent data to develop an index for this region.
 - c. Evaluate different methods to estimate commercial discards considering observer program and commercial discard logbook information along with coverage of the programs (federally permitted and state permitted vessels).
 - d. Use data from the Northeast Fishery Science Center observer program to expand bycatch observations in the gillnet fishery.

5. Update model parameter estimates and their variances, model uncertainties, estimates of stock status and management benchmarks, and provide the probability of overfishing occurring at specified future harvest and exploitation levels.
 - a. Explore the use of recent average recruitment instead of model-derived recruitment from the stock-recruit relationship. Determine an appropriate MSY proxy and timeseries for average recruitment.
 - b. If a direct estimate of MSY is not recommended, provide justification for the use of an MSY proxy and rationale supporting the value chosen (i.e. SPR%).
 - c. If an MSY proxy is recommended, discuss range of possible MSY proxies and the associated uncertainties.
 - d. Provide F, yield, discards, biomass, SSB and recruitment levels that correspond to MSY or its chosen proxy.
6. Compute short-term and long-term population projections as necessary to provide OFL estimates and ABC advice. Provide additional population projections as necessary to address overfishing or overfished stock conditions (e.g. rebuilding).
7. Convene a virtual data workshop or data webinar that includes NEFSC, Mid-Atlantic state representatives, industry representatives, and other technical experts to discuss inclusion of data streams north of Cape Hatteras along with standard data streams.
8. Convene a SAFMC approved technical workgroup including SSC representatives, industry representatives, and outside technical experts to meet via webinar or in-person as needed to review model development and provide guidance.
9. Develop a stock assessment report to address these TORs and fully document the input data, methods, and results.