SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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SEDAR (TBD)
South Atlantic Red Grouper
Terms of Reference

DRAFT: 10/21/2025

1. Update the SEDAR 53 South Atlantic Red Grouper assessment model with data using a terminal year of 2026. 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 53 assessment model and the proposed assessment model. Provide a model run using the SEDAR 53 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. Provide sensitivity analyses as needed to compare assessment results between new values in this assessment and values from SEDAR 53.
    e. 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. Incorporate index of abundance of South Florida Red Grouper.
    b. Evaluate the frequency and magnitude of recruitment coming from other regions such as the Gulf or areas to the south. Identify factors contributing to recent low recruitment.
    c. Update reproductive biology parameters and evaluate potential latitudinal variation in spawning characteristics.

    d. 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).

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 stock identification workshop and data workshop to:
    a. Resolve regional stock structure differences considering the spatially separated fishery-dependent or fishery-independent catches and incorporate a two-area model.
    b. Evaluate the frequency and magnitude of recruitment coming from other regions such as the Gulf or areas to the south. Identify factors contributing to recent low recruitment.
    c. Update reproductive biology parameters and evaluate potential latitudinal variation in spawning characteristics.

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.