A Review of proposed SEDAR Changes

SEFSC Staff

South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council

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SEFSC 10952

The SAFMC requests that the SEFSC provide a presentation on proposed revisions to the assessment process. The presentation should include information on how SEFSC proposes to use different types of assessments, analyses, or control rules (SEDAR assessments, MSEs, and assessments done outside of SEDAR) to provide the scientific basis for catch limits. Identify the stocks that SEFSC considers as having sufficient information for an age-based assessment.

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Background Information

- There is a need to increase the timeliness and throughput of fisheries management advice.
- Resources are not increasing, and are likely to decrease. Therefore to increase throughput we must reduce the time it takes.
- The duration of SEDAR projects has increased substantially

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SEDAR Project Timelines

Primary Council Objectives

SAFMC

- Timeliness (i.e. recency of TY)
- Flexibility to address issues that emerge
- Throughput – update ABCs every 1-2 years
  - MSE tested MPs/Interim Assessment
  - Routine updates
  - DLMs
  - SAFE Reports
- Transparency and thoroughness when needed
- Do the assessment that is appropriate for the data.

GMFMC

- Accuracy/Reproducibility
- Timeliness (i.e. recency of TY)
- Throughput and "long-lasting" catch advice
  - Interim assessment
  - Routine updates
- Transparency and thoroughness when needed
- Automation/Access to data, including FI Indices

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Primary Concerns

SAFMC

- Insufficient frequency and timeliness of management advice

- No flexibility or bandwidth to respond to an emerging issue

- Too long to put an assessment in the queue

- Need better SOWs/TORs

Note: The SEFSC shares many of these concerns

GMFMC

- Insufficient frequency and timeliness of management advice

- Lack of access to key data streams leads to council requests

- Current process is insufficiently transparent (e.g. to allow external reviewers to reproduce results)

- TORs may not be met

- Documentation fragmented (e.g. final projections not in SEDAR report)

Recommended Changes

1) **Eliminate RT/OA process** ✅

2) **Eliminate nomenclature and the slot concept** ✅

- Not all assessments are the same

- An age structured assessment with minimal changes can be completed in as little as 6-9 months.
- Additional features require additional time (e.g. stock ID, DW, AWs, TWGs, CIE Review, SSC rework)

3) *Identify "Key Stocks" and <u>prioritize</u> them* **WORK IN PROGRESS**

4) *Remaining stocks could be assessed using less time-consuming approaches (e.g update assessments, updated projections, IA, MPs). Generally conducted extra-SEDAR.* **WORK IN PROGRESS**

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5) SEFSC takes responsibility for the assessment component of SEDAR process

Impetus for change:

- Assessment webinars are inefficient, and often do not produce useful and consistent scientific advice.
  - Overall, we rarely gain technical insights during webinars.
  - Create logistic workload that could be better spent on model work.
  - Not an efficient or useful way to engage stakeholders.
  - Difficult to find times when all can attend.

- Changing Workforce

How to maintain transparency if the assessment process is run by the SEFSC

- What transparency will be available if the SEFSC runs the assessment portion/process?
  - The Data Workshop is a public meeting
    - If there is no DW, we can hold a data webinar if requested by the Council.
  - The SSC meetings and their public comment opportunities.
  - The Review Workshop.
  - We do not want to lose the technical input of the SSC members (as panelists), so we propose utilizing the SSC along the way.
    - Provide progress report(s) or ask for input on certain issues the technical team needs input along the way
      - Examples of Gulf Yellowedge, SA Snowy Grouper, and Gulf Red Grouper

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Things to keep in mind:

- Though we do not want to lose transparency, transparency is not the same as participation.
- We think the transparency proposed here meets the requirements without extending the assessment schedule.
  - Is it worth a longer schedule to continue with the way it has been done in the past?
- We've received feedback from SEDAR noting a decline in participation of the Panels (whether assessment panels, ADTs or TWG panels) and that often it seems like it contributes little to the assessment itself.

⬆Transparency = ⬇Throughput

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Procedural Details

Proposal for SEFSC SEDAR Projects for SAFMC, GMFMC and CFMC

- The SEDAR process will be limited to those assessments with sufficient new information to require external participation/review.

- Update assessments and interim assessment approaches would be ***conducted internally by the SEFSC*** and reviewed by the SSC.

- The SEFSC proposes to take responsibility for the assessment component of the SEDAR process. Data and review components remain unchanged.

- For SEDAR assessments, the specifics of each project will be negotiated between the Center and Council Staff with input from SSC/Council. A Council may elect to prepare a statement of work, or communicate verbally.

- The Councils will establish a standing Technical Team with diverse scientific expertise and fishing experience as appropriate for the cooperator and the logistics to which they must adhere.

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Proposal for SEFSC SEDAR Projects for SAFMC, GMFMC and CFMC

- **For all SEDAR projects**:

  - SEDAR will organize a data scoping call and the data workshop/webinar(s). The public is encouraged to participate.

  - The Center will then take over responsibility for the assessment component.

  - The Center will develop the assessment internally, and will coordinate ad-hoc meetings with members of the Technical Team as needed. The Center will provide a record of these communications for inclusion in the assessment report. Ad-hoc meetings could focus on technical issues, or on stakeholder input/outreach.

  - The role of the SSC in model development will be expanded. Council Staff will schedule a pre-decisional briefing(s) with the SSC to provide feedback on key decision points. The Center will revise the assessment as appropriate.

  - SEDAR will coordinate the review process as usual.

Proposal for SEFSC SEDAR Projects for SAFMC, GMFMC and CFMC

- **Optional Components**:
  - <u>In-person Data Workshop</u> - appropriate for new assessments, when many new data inputs must be considered, or when there is a need to substantially modify an existing assessment

  - <u>Data Webinar(s)</u> - appropriate when limited new information is available. These would function similarly to a Topical Working Group

  - <u>External CIE Review</u> - appropriate for new assessments, when many new data inputs must be considered, or when there is a need to substantially modify an existing assessment

  - <u>SSC Review</u> - appropriate when limited new information is available and for all updates/interim assessments conducted extra-SEDAR

Other extra-SEDAR assessments

- Update "lights" - To provide the most up-to-date management advice, the Center may update a recent assessment using all the available information, but some time-series may not be available through the terminal year. Provides new SDCs, OFL, ABCs etc.

- Updated projections - Re-run projections, and replace assumed removals with observed information. Retain SDCs, updated OFL and ABC.

- Interim assessment approaches - generally a DLM approach to adjust the existing ABC (e.g. using a reliable index). Retain SDCs.

- Management Procedure - an approved (e.g. MSE simulation tested) approach to manage a stock based on a model-based or empirical harvest control rule or strategy. Does not provide SDCs. Often provides short term catch advice (e.g. ABC).

- **The use of any of these approaches to inform management would be subject to SSC feedback and review.**

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What SATL species have can be assessed using age-structured approaches

- This question was addressed in a previous Council Request (Fall 2024; See **SAFMC Aging Availability.xlsx**)

- Difficult to speculate. Adding a species that hasn't been aged before often requires new ageing protocols and/or an ageing workshop with data partners

- White grunt is the most obvious candidate