SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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SEDAR (TBD)
South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper
Terms of Reference

DRAFT: 3/31/2026

1. Update the SEDAR 55 South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper 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 the 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 55 assessment model and the proposed assessment model. Provide a model run using the SEDAR 55 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. Incorporate calibrated timeseries for recreational landings and discards from revised MRIP-FES estimates. Consider MRIP recommended approaches for recreational catch data to reduce PSEs below 50%.
    c. Consider the newest and best methods for estimating natural mortality. Consider estimation of natural mortality within the stock assessment model.
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 the SEDAR 55 stock assessment model.
    b. Apply the best method to estimate commercial discards, considering observer program and commercial discard logbook information.
    c. Consider potential changes in selectivity due to management actions.
    d. Investigate and reconcile poor index model fits identified during SEDAR 55 standard assessment and SEDAR 83 interim analysis.

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 with recruitment deviates instead of model-derived recruitment from the stock-recruit relationship. Determine an appropriate MSY proxy and timeseries for average recruitment.
    b. Determine the best estimate to use as a management benchmark (e.g., direct estimate of MSY or a proxy). Include appropriate characterization of the uncertainty for the chosen management benchmark. If a proxy is chosen:
        i. Include sufficient justification for the decision to use a proxy.
        ii. Provide range of plausible proxy values and their associated uncertainties.
        iii. Provide run using the default proxy value or direct estimate of MSY (if available) as specified in the FMP.
    c. Provide F, yield, discards, biomass, SSB, and recruitment levels and associated uncertainty 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). 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.

7. Convene an Assessment Technical Team, including SSC and industry representatives and outside technical experts, to meet via webinar or in person as needed to review model development and provide guidance.

8. Schedule a pre-decisional briefing (i.e., SSC “check-in”) to review model development and discuss assessment uncertainties.

9. Develop a stock assessment report to address these TORs and fully document the input data, methods, and results. Discuss assessment outcomes, primary uncertainties, and any problems encountered during the assessment process.