



**Oct 2024**  
**SSC**  
**Meeting**

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# **Key Stocks Discussion**



# Key Stocks

- Key Stocks: Intent is to represent those stocks that ‘drive’ the fishery and provide a subset that can indicate conditions of the fishery and stocks in a larger complex (e.g. SG)
- Discussion going back to 2008 with identification of primary data collection stocks for age-based assessments
- Refined following the 2015 Tech Memo “Prioritizing Fish Stock Assessments”; “Key Stocks” coined to deal with the reality that not all SG stocks can be assessed



# Criteria for proposed Key Stocks

- Stock is a level 1 priority for the Council
  - Age-based assessment desired
- Stock is assessed successfully
  - Stocks selected for assessment in the past are clear priorities given there has never been a surplus of assessment capability.
  - Some assessments have been attempted but not passed peer review or have not been operationalized.
    - GA-NC Hogfish, Black Grouper, Goliath
    - Gray Triggerfish
- Stock is overfished
  - Rebuilding plans need regular evaluation



# Proposed Key Stocks

## SEFSC Assessed (14)

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Black Sea Bass    | 8. Red Porgy          |
| 2. Blueline Tilefish | 9. Red Snapper        |
| 3. Gag               | 10. Scamp             |
| 4. Golden Tilefish   | 11. Snowy Grouper     |
| 5. Greater Amberjack | 12. Spanish Mackerel  |
| 6. King Mackerel     | 13. Vermilion Snapper |
| 7. Red Grouper       | 14. Dolphin           |

## FL FWC Assessed (5)

- |                       |
|-----------------------|
| 1. Black Grouper      |
| 2. FLK/EFL Hogfish    |
| 3. Mutton Snapper     |
| 4. Yellowtail Snapper |
| 5. Spiny Lobster      |



# How Many Key Stocks can be Supported?

- More Stocks = More Time Between Assessments
- Age structure evaluation is a significant bottleneck; remains unclear how many age-based assessments can be supported on a regular and recurring basis as envisioned
- SEFSC Example (SEDAR Steering Committee July 2024 Attachment 3) included 14 stocks with 6 years between assessments, 2 completed per year initially, possibly increasing to 3 in later years
  - SSC provides ABC (projections) for 5y out
- Historic SEDAR planning has targeted around 12 primary stocks: 4 per year and 3y between assessments



# SEFSC Key Stocks Fixed Scheduling

## Preliminary SATL Calendar

	2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031				2032							
<b>South Atlantic</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Tilefish	D*	A	R												UM														D	A	R									
Blueline Tilefish		D	D	A	R											UM												D	A	R										
Cobia			D	D	A	A	A	R								UM												D	A	A	R									
Red Snapper				D	D	D	A	A	A	A	R									UM								D	D	A	A	R								
Gray Triggerfish	A	R						D	D	A	A	R												UM								D	A	A						
King Mackerel									D	D	A	A	R															UM								D				
Snowy Grouper											D	A	A	R														UM												
Gag Grouper												D	D	A	A	R											UM													
Red Grouper													D	D	A	A	R														UM									
Red Porgy																	D	A	A	R											UM									
Greater Amberjack																		D	A	A	R										UM									
Vermilion																				D	A	A	R									UM								
Scamp																					D	A	A	R												UM				
Spanish Mackerel																								D	A	A	R													



# Again, how many Key Stocks?

Scenario	Assess/Year	Interval	Key Stocks
Historic 3	4	3	12
Historic 4	4	4	16
SEFSC proposal near term	2	6	12
SEFSC proposal, future	3	6(?)	UNK

*Perspective, FMPs: 55 SG stocks, 2 DW stocks, 2 CMP stocks, 1 Golden Crab stock = 60 stocks total*

*Other FMPs not included – Coral, Sargassum, and Shrimp (4 species)*



# SSC input

- Support identifying key stocks for regular assessment scheduling?  
Support fixed, long-term scheduling of key stocks?
  - Essentially doing this now to set schedule priorities.
  - What are the foreseeable benefits/drawbacks to this approach?
- What information would guide the criteria for the determination of key stocks (e.g. landings trends, life history information, indices, past prioritization in research plan, etc.)?
  - What information is needed for the SSC to provide catch level recommendations vs. what is needed for a stock 'health check'?
  - Does the SSC recommend interim analyses, updates, or other methods for the 'UM' segments?
- Does the SSC recommend any changes to the proposed key stocks based on information identified above?



# Refining Key Stocks?

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
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| 4. Golden Tilefish   | 11. Snowy Grouper     |
| 5. Greater Amberjack | 12. Spanish Mackerel  |
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- Starting with 14 stocks
- Drop Dolphin from SEDAR (MSE underway)
  - 13
- Any others to consider dropping to get to 12?
  - Scamp, once rebuilt?
  - Blueline Tilefish – non-age model more compatible with stock-wide data?
- Others to be considered
  - Gray Triggerfish dropped from Operational in response to current workload concerns
  - Wreckfish
  - Other FMPs – shrimp, golden crab