

Proposal for an alternative scheduling approach to provide timely information for key stocks:

Approach Summary

- Identify 12-15 key stocks, defined as those that drive the management program.
 - The focus should be on stocks with the leverage to influence decisions on when or how to fish, such as Red Snapper, Black Sea Bass, Vermilion Snapper, and Cobia.
 - Consult with SEFSC, the SSC, and APs to develop the key stocks list.
 - Consider existing Council priorities, currently assessed stocks, and the NMFS prioritization tool (results of these shown in tables 1-3)
- Develop a regular long-term assessment schedule for the key stocks.
 - For example, if 12 stocks assessed by the Beaufort/SEFSC team are identified as key stocks requiring regular, timely updates, 3 could be assessed per year while leaving at least one of the 4 SAFMC planning slots available for benchmarks and other assessment needs.
 - Examples of assessment schedules possible under this approach are shown in Figures 1-2.
- Develop preliminary analyses addressing data indicators or “rumble strips” for each of these stocks to use in evaluating stock and fishery performance through annual or bi-annual fishery report cards.
 - The indicators would be built around metrics that are available on a timely basis, to facilitate their use in guiding management actions.
 - These analyses would consist of updated projection analyses that were used for establishing ABC's. The most recent data on landings, discards, FI indices, and age composition could be included in the analysis. Parameters to be estimated would include F's and recruitment, depending on data types updated. All other aspects would remain fixed based on last stock assessment.
 - ABC's could be updated from these interim analyses.
 - Provide a fishery report card for each key stock during years when the stock is not assessed. This may start as biannual information, with a goal of annual information in the future.
- Consider a pilot project, focusing on up to 4 stocks, to test the approach.

Potential Benefits

- More timely information on the stocks that drive fishery trends
- Opportunity to set aside some resources for long term priorities
- Improved and more efficient assessment planning
- Improved and more efficient planning for data and life history (ageing) demands
- Improved ability to manage assessment resources and balance workloads
- Improved planning for council management action timing

Potential Key Stocks

Table 1. Results of the NMFS Prioritization Tool.

RANK	STOCK
UNASSESSED STOCKS	
4	White Grunt
5	Lane Snapper
6	Gray Triggerfish*
8	Scamp
9	Dolphin
11	Almaco Jack
13	Knobbed Porgy
14	GA-NC Hogfish*
15	Speckled Hind
16	Goliath Grouper*
18	Silk Snapper
19	Red Hind
21	Warsaw Grouper
ASSESSED STOCKS	
1	Red Snapper
2	FLK/EFL Hogfish
3	Red Porgy
7	Snowy Grouper
10	Red Grouper
12	Blueline Tilefish
17	King Mackerel
20	Spanish Mackerel
22	Black Sea Bass
23	Gag
24	Cobia
25	Tilefish
26	Vermilion Snapper
27	Greater Amberjack
28	Black Grouper
29	Mutton Snapper
30	Yellowtail Snapper
31	Wreckfish

Table 2. Assessed Stocks.

Stock	Age in 2017	Status ¹	Terminal Data Year ³	Next Assessment Terminal Year	
				Terminal Yr	Completed
Gray Triggerfish	NA	4	NA		2021
Greater Amberjack	11	3	2006	2016	2018
Black Grouper	9	3	2008		
Spiny Lobster	8	3	2009		
Yellowtail Snapper	7	3	2010	TBD	2020
Wreckfish ²	7	3	2010		
Vermilion Snapper	6	3	2011	2016	2018
Red Porgy	6	1	2011	2017	2019
Spanish Mackerel	6	3	2011		2020
Cobia	6	3	2011	2017	2019
Mutton Snapper	6	3	2011		2021
Black Sea Bass	5	3	2012		2021
King Mackerel	5	3	2012	2017	2019
Snowy Grouper	5	1	2012	2017	2019
Gag	5	3	2012		2020
Hogfish (East FL)	5	1	2012		
Hogfish (NC-GA)	NA	4	2012		
Red Snapper	3	1	2014		2020
golden Tilefish	3	3	2014	2017	2019
Goliath Grouper	NA	4	2014		
Red Grouper	2	1	2015		2021
Blueline Tilefish	2	2	2015		

¹. Status according to the prior assessment: 1 = overfished or in rebuilding, 2 = overfishing, 3 = neither overfished nor overfishing, 4 = assessments attempted but rejected by peer review.

². Wreckfish was assessed by an outside contractor funded by fishery participants. It was reviewed by the SSC, per Council policies developed to accommodate assessments provided outside the SEDAR process.

³. Reported for the current assessment – not ones indicated in the “next assessment” columns.

Table 3. SAFMC assessment and data collection priority stocks.

Primary: 23 spp.	Secondary: 12 spp.	Special: 9 spp.
Vermilion Snapper	Tomtate	Warsaw grouper
Snowy Grouper	Knobbed Porgy	Speckled Hind
golden Tilefish	Bar Jack	Goliath grouper
Red Grouper	Almaco Jack	Nassau grouper
Black Grouper	Lane Snapper	Red Snapper
Scamp	Banded Rudderfish	Wreckfish
Black Sea Bass	Rock Hind	Spiny Lobster
Gag	Red Hind	Golden Crab
Red Snapper	Wahoo	Dolphin
Greater Amberjack	Penaeid Shrimp	
White Grunt	Atlantic Spadefish	
Yellowtail Snapper	Silk Snapper	
Gray Triggerfish		
Mutton Snapper		
Red Porgy		
Dolphin		
King Mackerel		
Spanish Mackerel		
Blueline Tilefish		
Cobia		
Hogfish (2 stocks)		
Gray Snapper		
Spiny Lobster		

Figure 1. Possible assessment work plan for 12 key stocks and 4 analysts.

With 4 analysts, 7 stocks each year (ABC advice on at least 6 stocks) (Annually: 1 Open Slot, 3 Updates, 3 Interim Analyses)									
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Spp1	Update		Interim		Spp1	Analyst1		Analyst1	
Spp2		Update		Interim	Spp2		Analyst1		Analyst1
Spp3	Interim		Update		Spp3	Analyst1		Analyst1	
Spp4		Interim		Update	Spp4		Analyst1		Analyst1
Spp5	Update		Interim		Spp5	Analyst2		Analyst2	
Spp6		Update		Interim	Spp6		Analyst2		Analyst2
Spp7	Interim		Update		Spp7	Analyst2		Analyst2	
Spp8		Interim		Update	Spp8		Analyst2		Analyst2
Spp9	Update		Interim		Spp9	Analyst3		Analyst3	
Spp10		Update		Interim	Spp10		Analyst3		Analyst3
Spp11	Interim		Update		Spp11	Analyst3		Analyst3	
Spp12		Interim		Update	Spp12		Analyst3		Analyst3
					Open Slot	Analyst4			
					Open Slot		Analyst4		
					Open Slot			Analyst4	
					Open Slot				Analyst4

Figure 2. Example annual assessment cycles and analyst work load.

Options for annual cycle for one analyst (1 update and 1 interim analysis each year)													
				S S C			D A T A			S S C			
Annual Cycle													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Analyst 1	Update Assessment, run by SEFSC Terminal Yr = Current-2								Interim Analysis, Data through Previous Year				
				S S C			D A T A			S S C			
Annual Cycle													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Analyst 1		Interim Analysis, Data from 2 years ago					Update Assessment, run by SEFSC Terminal Yr = Previous Year						