

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



**SSC Meeting Overview**

**July 29, 2011**

**Conference Call**

**VERSION  
7/1/2011**

### PURPOSE

This meeting is convened to:

- Review alternative Spanish Mackerel ABC
- Identify SEDAR 28 Participants and review TORS
- Review 2013 assessment priorities

### CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	3
2.	REVIEW SPANISH MACKEREL ABC .....	3
3.	SEDAR 28 .....	4
4.	2013 ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES .....	5
5.	OTHER BUSINESS .....	7
6.	ADJOURN .....	7

**Documents:**

- Attachment 1. ALTERNATIVE SPANISH MACKEREL ABC
- Attachment 2. SEDAR 28 TORS
- Attachment 3. SEDAR ASSESSMENT LIST

**Attendance**

**MEMBERS:**

- |                                  |                        |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Carolyn Belcher, Chair</i>    | <i>Eric Johnson</i>    |
| <i>Luiz Barbieri, Vice-Chair</i> | <i>Sherry Larkin</i>   |
| <i>Jim Berkson</i>               | <i>Anne Lange</i>      |
| <i>Jeff Buckel</i>               | <i>Marcel Reichert</i> |
| <i>Steve Cadrin</i>              | <i>George Sedberry</i> |
| <i>Chip Collier</i>              | <i>John Whitehead</i>  |
| <i>Scott Crosson</i>             | <i>Tracy Yandle</i>    |
| <i>Churchill Grimes</i>          |                        |

**Others:**

- John Carmichael, SAFMC*
- Mike Errigo, SAFMC*
- Gregg Waugh, SAFMC*

*Observers accessing via internet streaming are unknown.*

## Attendance

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Documents

Agenda

#### 1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

*The agenda was approved without modification*

### 2. REVIEW SPANISH MACKEREL ABC

#### 2.1. Documents

Attachment 1. ALTERNATIVE SPANISH MACKEREL ABC

#### 2.2. Overview

The Council requests that the SSC consider an interim alternative ABC for Spanish mackerel proposed at the June meeting. The alternative bases ABC on the third highest landings values by fishery sector, rather than on the total annual landings as in the current SSC control rule recommendation. It is intended to be in effect until the results of the planned Spanish mackerel SEDAR assessment are available and reviewed by the SSC, which is expected to occur in Fall 2012.

#### 2.3. Action

- Review and comment on the alternative ABC.  
Does the SSC endorse the approach and the Spanish mackerel ABC it provides?

*John Carmichael briefed the group on the Council request.*

*- SSC amenable to reconsidering the Spanish mackerel ABC if the council desires.*

*-One justification for an overall reconsideration would be that the Council will accept a higher tolerance for risk than that implied by the current recommendation.*

*-This does not appear to be the case in this situation, as the justification is based on sectors and their propensity to meet allocations over the past, there is no indication of the risk tolerance for the overall ABC that results. SSC does not feel that the Council has provided an adequate justification for reconsidering the ABC.*

- *Concern expressed that accepting an alternative method for a single stock would establish a precedent for other stocks. Also concerned that adopting this approach will undermine the integrity of the recommended control rule that provides the basis for all unassessed stocks ABCs. It is noted that the SSC developed the current control rule after considerable deliberation, and in response to criticisms for adopting ad hoc and inconsistent approaches for establishing ABCs.*
- *The SSC is not supportive of developing an ABC based on the sector - specific approach as proposed by the Council. The SSC considers the ABC to be a parameter relating to the overall population and removed from issues related to allocations that the Council may consider. It is not biologically defensible to establish ABCs based on Sector-specific data.*
- *The SSC clarified that the ABC for Spanish mackerel is based on the recommendations from the stock assessment and the SSC's opinion on the sustainable level of harvest given those assessment findings. Issues regarding allocation of the ABC and whether a sector reaches its allocation come after ABC deliberations. Ordering of these events is important.*
- *It was noted that the current TAC is 7.05 million pounds and has been in place since the 1999 fishing year. The assessment review panel stated that overfishing was minor to not occurring since 2000, or essentially the same period used to establish the ABC.*
- *Members discussed other alternatives for ABC, if the SSC were to reconsider the recommendation on a larger scale. Two options considered were the current TAC and the highest observed landings (1999-2008). It was acknowledged that such options were considered and discussed on at least 2 other occasions by the SSC. The Committee agreed that other alternatives could be considered, but doing so is beyond the scope of the request from the Council, and would require more time and information than is available.*

***SSC Recommendation: The SSC does not recommend pursuing the approach suggested by the Council for Spanish mackerel. The SSC did indicate they would be willing to revisit discussions to determine if setting the level at the present TAC was an interim option, given overfishing was minor to non-existent during the reviewed time period.***

### **3. SEDAR 28**

#### **3.1. Documents**

Attachment 2. SEDAR 28 TORs

#### **3.2. Overview**

SEDAR 28 will assess Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and cobia. The data workshop will likely be held in Spring 2011. Specific dates are not yet available, pending resolution of some scheduling issues by the Science Center and SEDAR Steering Committee.

Atlantic Cobia have not been previously assessed. Atlantic Spanish mackerel were assessed through the Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel prior to SEDAR and recently during SEDAR 17. The SEDAR 17 assessment was not able to provide measure of biomass or exploitation considered reliable by the review panel or SSC. An assessment model that will accommodate both Atlantic and Gulf Spanish mackerel is desired for this assessment.

The Council will consider the TORs and appointments for SEDAR 28 at its September meeting.

### 3.3. Action

- Review and comment on the TORs
- Indicate SSC participants

*The SSC supported the TORs for SEDAR 28. The following additional RW TOR was recommended:*

- *If there are significant changes to the base model, or to the choice of alternate states of nature, then provide a probability distribution function for the base model, or a combination of models that represent alternate states of nature, presented for review. Provide justification for the weightings used in producing the combinations of models.*

*SSC members interested in participating:  
Steve Cadrin, Luiz Barbieri, and Anne Lange are interested in any stage, depending on timing and availability.*

*Chip Collier and Marcel Reichert expect to participate in the Data Workshop as data providers*

*Mike Denson of SC DNR, active in cobia research and monitoring, was suggested as a participant.*

## 4. 2013 ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES

### 4.1. Documents

Attachment 3. SEDAR ASSESSMENT LIST

### 4.2. Overview

The Council identified a list of assessment priorities for 2013 that will be discussed again at the September meeting before being considered by the SEDAR Steering Committee in October. It is expected that the SEFSC can provide 4-6 assessments in 2013, depending on the type and their complexity.

Initial SAFMC Priorities:

1. red snapper benchmark

An evaluation of red snapper is necessary in 2013, based on provisions in Amendment 17A that required an evaluation of the stock in 3 years.

2. blueline tilefish benchmark

Blueline tilefish is a top priority based on the developing fishery. No prior assessment exists.

3. gray triggerfish benchmark

There is concern over the status of gray triggerfish due to increasing importance in the fishery. No prior assessment exists.

4. gag std or update (based on appropriateness)

The last assessment of gag was conducted in 2006. The SSC is asked to recommend whether an update or standard should be considered.

5. snowy std or update (based on appropriateness)

The last assessment of snowy grouper was conducted in 2004. The SSC is asked to recommend whether an update or standard should be considered.

6. speckled hind benchmark

No prior assessment is available. Data availability is a primary concern.

7. scamp benchmark

No prior assessment is available.

8. Warsaw benchmark

No prior assessment is available. There are concerns that an assessment based solely on US waters and landings would not be informative given the wide range of the stock.

9. wreckfish benchmark

No SEDAR assessment is available. Data confidentiality for commercial landings is a major concern.

#### 4.3. Action

- Review and comment on the prioritized assessment list
- Consider the type of assessment necessary for gag and snowy grouper

*The Committee recommended that gag be conducted as a standard assessment, based on the considerable duration of time since the original benchmark. This would allow for some flexibility to address new information that may emerge or changes in the fishery that have occurred.*

*The Committee recommended that snowy grouper be conducted as a standard assessment, based on the duration of time since the original benchmark and noted changes in the fishery. The last assessment relied heavily on fishery-dependent CPUE measures, but changes in the fishery since then may have impacted these data sources.*

*The Committee suggested elevating the priority of scamp to the moderate level. The Committee suggested adding white grunt as a moderate priority.*

*The SSC did not have a preference for the ordering of the assessments, but recommended the species be addressed with the following priorities:*

***Primary Priority***

*red snapper benchmark  
blueline tilefish benchmark*

***Secondary Priority***

*gray triggerfish benchmark  
gag – The SSC recommended this be conducted as a standard assessment  
white grunt benchmark  
scamp benchmark  
snowy grouper – The SSC recommended this be conducted as a standard assessment*

*The SSC recommended gray triggerfish, white grunt, and scamp at the middle priority level as these species have no SEDAR assessment available, and presumably they are under pressure as a result of other regulations. Gray triggerfish and white grunt have been bumped on several occasions in previous years. There are good data available (provided adequate time for processing) for all species.*

*Snowy grouper has an old assessment, and a new assessment is needed as a result of management. Snowy has been on the schedule previously, but has also been bumped. There is a reasonable amount of data, including fishery independent data.*

***Tertiary Priority\****

*speckled hind benchmark  
Warsaw benchmark  
wreckfish benchmark*

*\*- The low priority for these species is related to concerns over data availability and the contribution of these stocks to the overall fishery.*

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

## **6. ADJOURN**