Preliminary Application of the ORCS Approach

An initial attempt was made to fill out the table of attributes for assigning stock status to all the unassessed stocks in the South Atlantic, under the ORCS tab in the Excel spreadsheet. Some information was unavailable (such as estimates of M for some species) and other information was assumed or inferred. Trends in the catch history were evaluated assuming effort remained fairly stable, at least in the most recent years. Value of a species was based on price per pound information obtained from the Regional Office from 2009 and 2010. It was assumed that natural refugia did not cover more than 25% of any particular species' habitat. For the comparison of natural mortality, 0.2-0.3 was considered the average range of M for dominant species in the South Atlantic. Rarity of a species was determined based on the magnitude of the landings. Up to the low 10,000's was considered rare. Mid 10,000's to low 100,000's was considered not uncommon. Higher than that was considered common. All categories and descriptions came directly from the ORCS Report. The overall fishery exploitation was based on similar assessed stocks. For example, all the porgies were given a designation based on the Red Porgy assessment. For groupers and snappers, there were several assessed species. A designation was assigned based on which assessed species had the most similar life history parameters to the species in question.

Another attempt was made to fill out this table based on the MRAG report. The MRAG score for susceptibility was used as a proxy for several categories in the ORCS table. I combined presence of refugia, behavior affecting capture (schooling, aggregating, etc.), morphological characteristics affecting capture, rarity, and whether the species is bycatch or targeted, into one category and assigned the MRAG score for susceptibility to that category. These categories were the ones condensed into one based on the description of the susceptibility score in the MRAG report. The remaining categories were filled out as was outlined above. This was done for all species except dolphin and wahoo, which were not included in the MRAG report.